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THE ORIGINS OF ART

A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

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THE SACRED SHRINE

A STUDY OF THE POETRY AND ART OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY

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INTRODUCTORY

It has not been possible to indicate the aim of the present work by means of an unequivocal title. Some introductory explanation as to the purpose of the following investigations should not, therefore, be superfluous. The reader has a claim to know for what end his attention is demanded; the author, again, has the right to defend himself against the misapprehensions to which the name of his book may give rise.

The subject I propose to treat is connected with the theory of Art, and the questions dealt with in the following pages have all been apprehended as aesthetic problems; but in the treatment of these problems other methods have been used than those of purely aesthetic inquiry. The further the work proceeded, the more evident became the necessity of taking into consideration phenomena connected only indirectly with man's artistic activity. Thus an investigation which was intended to move within only a limited department, has spread itself little by little over a far wider field of study.

According to the original design, this book was to

serve as a commentary on the pictorial representations of religious subjects. It seemed to the author that the painting and sculpture of the Church would gain additional interest if they were displayed in relation to the Church's poetry. In the case of highly developed art, such a literary interpretation is doubtless superfluous. The work of the Renaissance, and especially of the High Renaissance, certainly does not require any textual commentary in order to be immediately appreciated. In Mediaeval art, however, there are many features which seem strange to any one who has not been initiated into the mediaeval conception of life; and if here, too, the purely artistic element can be understood and explained only with the help of a criticism which, in the first place, pays attention to the technical qualities, yet that element is often hidden from the superficial view. Therefore the study of the literary motive, which in modern art is rightly considered to be of secondary importance, may, in the case of the older painting, serve as a help to the attention and an aid to the memory. For the present writer, at any rate, the old pictures gained an additional attraction after he had learned to recognise all the ideas to which they gave expression; and it seemed as if even the religious sculptures and pictures would have more to tell, from a purely artistic point of view, if one tried to look at them as they were looked at by the faithful. Thus, religious art led on to the study of the Christian mythology; that is to say, to the legends and poems which are illustrated in mediaeval works of art.

This study, however, proved so attractive that it soon engrossed attention for its own sake. Mediaeval poetry opened a new and fascinating field of investigation, which it was not easy to abandon before at least a general knowledge of the subject had been acquired. When the time during which I had the opportunity of devoting myself to the study of religious painting in the native lands of art was finished, I thus directed my chief interest instead to religious poetry. Here the poets of the Early Christian period were the subject of inquiry, no less than those of the Middle Ages proper. In the subtleties of Ephraim Syrus, the mild unction of Ambrosius, the decadent rhetoric of Hieronymus, and in the late classic diction of Hilarius and Fortunatus, I sought the characteristics of the literary production of the older Church. Among the later authors were examined especially Adam de S. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and the great poet who is called by modern literary historians Bernard of Morlas. According to my intention at that time, my work was to be an aesthetic and literary description of the influence of the works of art and the poems upon each other; but this scheme also had before long to be subjected to alteration.

Mediaeval poetry cannot, indeed, any more than mediaeval art, be explained as an isolated phenomenon. The old poets remain strange to us so long as we know only their works. On the other hand, these works do not, like most modern literary productions, stand in any

indissoluble connection with historical conditions and social environment. The poetry of the Church has germinated, irrespective of the geographical *milieu* and the historical moment, from that doctrine which, in its essential characteristics, has remained unaltered in all ages and in all lands. It is, therefore, to the field of theological speculation that we must turn, if we are to carry out the old rule that bids the critic "in Dichters Lande gehen."

Religious conceptions, however, have claimed a far more detailed study than the author originally anticipated. In the following chapters, indeed, this subject occupies more space than may perhaps seem suitable in an aesthetic investigation. During the progress of the work it became clear not only that the dogmas afford explanations of particular works of art or poetry, but also that in them we have to look for the innermost principle of the leading qualities of Catholic Art. What the artists have represented and the poets sung has, in many cases, shown itself as a working-out of aesthetic motives lying hidden in the theological system of thought. Catholic doctrine is rich in poetic possibilities; and it has even occurred to the author that the doctrine itself results from a speculation which in great measure was directed by aesthetic aspirations. In the purely theological writings of the Fathers of the Church and of the Ascetics, one seems able continually to trace effects of an artistic creation, which is none the less significant although it is unconscious and uninten-

tional. Thus from some great and common principles it should be possible to explain a production which remains homogeneous in its character, notwithstanding that it expresses itself in such heterogeneous forms as dogmas, poems, and pictures. This is what has been attempted in the present work, which, having begun as a description purely of aesthetic and literary history, has developed into a synthetic treatment of the aesthetic characteristics of Catholic mentality.

In so far as the subject has been widened, the method has also necessarily been changed. The individual works of art and poetry which, in accordance with the original plan, were to be commented upon by the help of the dogmatic conceptions, have, instead, been brought forward simply as illustrations of the great anonymous and collective poem decipherable in the whole of the Church's doctrine. In order to preserve the symmetry of the work, the number of examples drawn from aesthetic and literary history has been reduced to the farthest degree possible; but in order, on the other hand, that the bearing of the inquiry on the artistic production may stand out with full distinctness, additional references have been introduced in supplementary notes, which are not necessary for a comprehension of the text and which can be read independently of it.

It ought to be mentioned, however, that in these notes I have by no means attempted to attain completeness. Such an endeavour would have involved

the extension of the work far beyond the limits I intended to set for it. The gaps which the reader will observe in the lists of pictures and poems are therefore due to the fact that the aim of the investigation is not descriptive. In the questions we have tried to settle, nothing would have been gained by an augmentation of the number of examples.

The plan of the book also explains why the chronological order has not been observed with the same exactitude that is necessary in a purely historical account. It is not any particular phase in aesthetic development that has here been the object of study, nor is it any special poetical or art forms that I have tried to explain. The subject of this inquiry is rather that state of mind which, unaltered in its main features through the ages, has lain at the foundation of the aesthetic life of believing Catholics. In the citation of examples I have, indeed, striven to take into account the influence exercised by religious currents in various times on the life of faith and on artistic production. Nevertheless, it is primarily that which is common to all periods, rather than that by which they differ, which has been emphasised in the study. Such a method of treatment is surely quite justifiable when we are dealing with that Church which has, throughout its whole development, sought to preserve the continuity of tradition. In many cases we may explain the ideas of modern Catholics by referring to dogmatists of the thirteenth century, and in books of the present time we

may find a direct continuation of arguments set forth by the ancient writers. The Catholic Church is a Middle Age which has survived into the twentieth century. Periods of time and geographical differences signify little for the system of belief which claims recognition *semper, et ubique, et ab omnibus.*

We have now indicated briefly what is not to be looked for in the present work. What it attempts to explain will appear in the first chapters. Here it only remains to make clear the point of view adopted with reference to the religious ideas which will be so frequently touched upon and discussed.

It hardly needs to be specially mentioned that the detailed accounts of religious customs and beliefs are not intended to serve as an apology, still less as a propaganda for Roman doctrine. The author has felt himself quite at liberty to apply to all religious conceptions a strictly scientific method of investigation; but it has not seemed advisable to engage in any examination of the rationality of Catholic dogmas. By putting aside all objections for the time the inquiry lasts, the argument is allowed to proceed without disturbing interruptions. Such a method, which would be improper in a philosophic or an ethical appreciation, cannot but be advantageous in an *aesthetic* interpretation of the art-life of the Church.

It is a critic's duty to strive, to the best of his power, to make his own the state of mind which expresses itself in art and poetry. One must put one-

self in the mentality of the believer in order rightly to estimate his aesthetic life. Looked at from the point of view of an outsider, the manifestations of Catholic Art appear in many cases meaningless and uninteresting; but the confusion becomes order, and the seemingly unimportant becomes interesting, if one makes oneself familiar with the world-philosophy which lies at the basis of the aesthetic production. Such a familiarity is by no means easy of attainment for one who is himself a stranger to the religious way of looking at things; but the difficulties make the task attractive, and the knowledge of the purport of the Art and Poetry which one gains through such an experiment of thought affords compensation for the effort. Therefore it has seemed to me that an attempt to explain the art-life of the Catholic Church from an inner point of view ought not to be altogether vain. It is for the reader to decide whether this belief has not been one of those illusions which one is so prone to cherish at the commencement of a long and laborious work.

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CHAPTER I

CATHOLIC ART

. . . . . .
L'âme des jours anciens a traversé la pierre
De sa douleur, de son encens, de sa prière
Et resplendit dans les soleils des ostensoirs.

Et tel, avec ses toits lustrés comme un peunage,
Le temple entier paraît surgir, au fond des soirs,
Comme une châsse énorme, où dort le moyen âge.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN, *Soir religieux.*

IT is well known that Art, at the lowest stages of aesthetic development, is closely connected with Religion. Some eminent ethnologists have even asserted that among savage peoples all Art is religious in its innermost meaning. In order to establish this theory, however, they have been compelled to apply the conception of Religion in a very wide sense. They have ranged under this heading all superstitious ideas and magical customs, and have seen something religious in the very reverence with which the inheritance of ancestors — whether consisting of implements or of customs—has been preserved by their descendants. By means of such a use of terms they have been able to maintain that for primitive man dramas, dances, and poems, no less than pictures and ornaments, always serve an end that is more religious than aesthetic.

Against this conception many just objections have

been raised. Ridicule has been cast on the learned bias which has led earnest investigators to grope after some hidden and sacred meaning in carvings and paintings that may well have their sole origin in some casual impulse of an idle hand; and it has been advanced that at any rate the simplest songs and dances are most easily explained as outbursts of emotional pressure which in itself has no connection at all with religious feeling. However sound in principle, this reaction from a fantastic zeal for interpretation may nevertheless lead to a too radical scepticism. On a more careful examination it has in many separate cases appeared that primitive works of art, which seemed to be entirely devoid of any deeper meaning, are, in reality, full of symbolic and religious import. It is therefore impossible to determine with exactitude to what degree Religion plays a part in the aesthetic life of savage peoples. *A priori* discussion can have no weight in a problem which can only be settled after all the known races of men have been the subject of a thorough study by both folk-lorists and psychologists.[1]

In this work, however, it is by no means necessary to pronounce any judgment as to the exact measure of the influence exercised by Religion on art-production. Without being compelled to embark on any examination of the facts advanced on both sides, we can draw from the mere discussion of the difficult question two conclusions which are quite decisive for our purpose. The one conclusion, now recognised by all parties, is that the aesthetic manifestations of the lower races of men stand, on the whole, in a much closer relation to Religion, than does the art of civilised peoples. The other conclusion is that the religious element in primitive productions is often concealed from the

uninitiated observer—that is to say, as repeated discussions have proved, we can only with difficulty form any idea as to the religious or non-religious character of the particular art-forms from the concrete works and manifestations themselves.

The close connection between Religion and Art has its basis in a circumstance which can be unfailingly observed in lower peoples. The "Religion" of primitive man dominates the whole of both his individual and his social life. He traces the influence of the unknown divine powers everywhere, and, in consequence, even his most ordinary activities become associated with religious feelings and ideas. But if his conception of the material world is thus consistently spiritualistic, or perhaps rather animistic, his conception of the soul and the divine is, on the other hand, as consistently materialistic. Although Religion penetrates his entire being, and confers its grave dignity on even the least important actions, yet it is not capable of raising itself perceptibly above everyday existence. When the religious life expresses itself in artistic production, it is consequently difficult for the uninitiated to distinguish this expression from profane art.

Such, characterised generally, appears to be the relation between Art and Religion at the lowest stages of development. For the clearness of the argument it is best to pass by all intermediate phases, and proceed immediately to the highest forms of belief.

In the degree that ideas of the divine are spiritualised, the difference between religious and profane art is more firmly established; but in the same degree, also, the field of religious art becomes limited. The terrestrial and the celestial no longer blend with one another, but

stand as opposites. Little by little the unknown powers lose the anthropomorphic or zoömorphic form in which they revealed themselves to primitive imagination. Consequently pictorial art entirely loses its importance as a means of effecting a union between mankind and the Supreme Being. Dancing, the drama, and decoration are looked upon as unworthy forms of homage to a Power which is conceived of as raised above the world of sense; and poetry and music, the least material of all the arts, become the only expressions which are permitted to serve the aims of religious life. Even poetry occupies a relatively insignificant place in the ritual system of those religions which are intellectually and morally the most severe.

In fortunate cases a rich secular production may develop by the side of a poor religious art; but where a stern religion maintains its hold over the mind, it easily tends to stifle, or at least seriously to limit, aesthetic life. Thus among the most thorough-going Lutherans, as among the Jansenists and Puritans, Art leads a languishing life. This general assertion is not contradicted by the fact, so frequently adduced, that some individual kinds of aesthetic production are directly promoted by these intellectualist forms of Religion. The psychological and the moral novel, the depicting of nature and realistic portraiture—those specifically Protestant art-forms—cannot outweigh the loss of all the aesthetic manifestations which have been suppressed in many Protestant societies. Whether it be ultimately due to a racial characteristic of the peoples who carried through and adopted the Reformation, or to peculiarities in the Protestant creed itself, it is an indisputable fact that the very form of the Christian religion which for us stands as intellectually the purest of all, has only in

a small degree allowed its aims to be served by aesthetic production.[2]

By means of these hasty indications, the contrast between the lowest and the highest doctrines ought already to appear with sufficient distinctness. Where religion is undeveloped, as among primitive peoples, it has given rise to a considerable aesthetic production; where its manifestation is intellectually and morally purest, the corresponding religious art is poor. This is the one antithesis. The other one is no less significant. The ideas of divinity which lie at the foundation of the rich religious art of primitive and barbaric man, are not sufficiently lofty to give this art a specifically religious character; the ideas, on the other hand, which lie at the foundation of the most intellectual Christianity, are too lofty to allow of their being united with the sensuous element in aesthetic production. If we want to study the psychological connection between religious and aesthetic life, neither of these extreme forms can afford us the material we require. Were it here our task to treat of general emotional states—without reference to corresponding positive doctrines of faith—it would not be difficult to find near at hand an intermediate form between the two contrasted types of religion. The philosophy of life which is adopted by the majority of modern agnostics is often unconsciously religious, so far as its emotional tone is concerned. Again, the ideas of the unknowable that enter into such a pantheistic or monistic world-philosophy attach themselves as closely to all the manifestations of earthly life as is the case even with a primitive religion. They do not give rise to any irreconcilable opposition between the sensuous and the non-sensuous, the natural and the supernatural, but, on the other hand, they are

not so materialistic and anthropomorphic as the world-view of lower man. Thus if that use of terms be recognised, according to which all severe and lofty art is characterised as being in its essence religious, it will perhaps be found that the most elevated religious works of art have no connection whatever with positive doctrines of faith. In this work, however, it is only the historical religions which are to be considered.

After all the explanation that has been given, it is not necessary to advance further reasons for the fact that the material for the following inquiry has been derived from that form of Religion which unites in itself elements from the lowest and the highest forms of belief, that is to say, Roman Catholic Christianity. That the Catholic belief has exercised a powerful influence on aesthetic development cannot be gainsaid by any impartial observer. During long and glorious periods of Art-history, aesthetic production worked obediently in the service of religion. The Church was the Maecenas which, with its moral and financial support, assisted the masters of the early Renaissance in nearly all their work. Since these times, indeed, purely Church art has sunk—it would seem, hopelessly—from its lofty position; but that the creed itself continues to possess a strong attraction for artistic minds is evident from the great number of converts obtained by Catholicism from among poets and painters.

Many reasons can easily be given to account for the power of the Roman Church over men who possess a pronounced aesthetic temperament. The external pomp of its ceremonies is the attraction which is most frequently adduced when the question of the successful propaganda of Catholicism arises; but this pomp, as it is found in modern churches, is as a rule too barbaric to appeal

to a cultivated taste. Far greater weight should, we think, be attached to the circumstance that the Catholic Church, through its ceremonies, connects itself so nearly with the existence of its individual members. Every event in their lives is distinguished and sanctified by a special sacrament. The believer feels bound to the Church, and in all his troubles is aware of the support of its authority. The fact that the ceremonies thus push their way into life—with Baptism in the Church, public Confirmation and Marriage, Confession and Absolution, Extreme Unction and Communion on the death-bed—must naturally give rich nourishment to the religious-aesthetic feelings. It is not only the advocates of Catholicism who have had eyes for this power in the Roman Community. No less convincingly than Chateaubriand in *Génie du christianisme*,[3] Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* has enlarged upon the significance to religion of the many sacraments.[4] One can assert quite literally that for pious Catholics the whole of life takes the form of an external visible service of God.[5] In this, as in so many other respects, the ceremonial system of the Roman Church resembles the cults of primitive and barbaric peoples.

The similarity, however, should not lead to identification. On the ground of the magical features in its ritual the Roman religion has often, especially in Protestant polemic, been represented as a materialistic heathendom; but in doing so, the fact has been overlooked that the material and the visible comprises only one side of a Catholic ceremony. However closely this religion may connect itself with what is earthly, yet it does not become absorbed in the phenomena of sense. The divine is not subjected, as is the case to a certain extent among savage peoples, to being jumbled together with

the natural; on the contrary, the transcendence of the Supreme Being is insisted upon in the Catholic dogmas as emphatically as in the most intellectualistic of the Protestant confessions. But this Supreme Being, which in itself is raised above the world of sense, is not entirely beyond the reach of the perception of sense. Through the religious miracle it enters into connection with earthly elements, and through this connection it allows itself to be appropriated not only by the thought but also by the senses. It is by this doctrine of a mystic union between the visible and the invisible that the Catholic cult achieves its characteristic quality; and it is by reason of the same doctrine that Catholic art is more aesthetic than Protestant art, and more religious than heathen art.

In order to learn to know the distinctive qualities of Catholic art we must, therefore, direct our attention to those dogmas which express the thought of the connection of the Supreme Being with the world of sense. It is in two conceptions, especially, that this thought asserts itself: in the doctrine of the Presence of the Divinity in the Sacrament of the Altar, and in the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Divinity in the human mother. These two doctrines determine the titles and the contents of the parts into which this work falls—the Mass and the Cult of the Madonna. The most important of the aesthetic manifestations which serve the end of the Catholic religion arrange themselves naturally under one or the other of those headings.

The material for the following investigations will thus be grouped according to dogmatic principles; but at the same time an attempt will be made to treat the different art-forms separately, as far as possible. Such a twofold division can be carried out easily

and without prejudice to the plan of the work. Indeed, from the nature of the subject itself, architecture, decorative art, and religious pantomime form the principal contents of the chapters dealing with the Mass ritual. In the account of the Cult of the Madonna, again, sculpture, painting, and poetry will be the primary subjects of treatment. From art-forms, which, if not the oldest, are at any rate the simplest, the investigation will thus proceed to higher and freer lines of aesthetic production. And the beginning is made with that art which presents the most concrete subjects of study—the art of decoration, or, more properly, artistic handicraft. The first things to be examined, therefore, will be the forms and ornamentation of the furniture and instruments directly or indirectly connected with the Mass ritual.

Before proceeding to an inquiry into all the numerous objects which together make up the department of Catholic applied art, we should first ascertain, however, whether among them there is no particular implement which has before all others been favoured with adornment. Such typical objects, around which decoration concentrates, and in which one may read off, so to say, the dominating characters in an art-style, are, as a rule, to be found in the production of most periods and nations. The water-jar of the Pueblo Indians—if I may refer to some earlier studies of my own—is such a typical object, which represents its nation and which, better than any other implement, gives us information about the ways and ideas of this people. The shields of the Dyaks—painted with ghastly ornaments, and hung with tufts of human hair—give in monstrous summary a picture of the wild ways and the highly developed art of these savage head-hunters. And, to

quote a more celebrated example, how much do not the vases tell us about old Grecian life—those vases which have served so many varying purposes; from which mirth has been drawn at banquets; in which gifts have been offered in the temples; which enclose the ashes of the deceased; and in which pious survivors have collected the tears they have wept over their beloved dead? It would seem, therefore, as if much would be gained towards a clear conception of Catholic art if we could lay hold of some typical object which, not with regard to form and purpose, but with regard to its dominating and representative rôle, corresponded in a sense to the Grecian vase.

If this work fulfils its purpose, it will demonstrate that such a typical and representative object of Catholic art can indeed be pointed out. What the following chapters attempt to prove can, however, be put forward here only as a proposition. Catholic art does not form and embellish a vase, but *it ornaments a shrine.* Chests, cases, or small boxes—in a word, closed coverings which conceal valuable contents—are the most holy, and therefore the most beautifully formed and most expensively decorated of all the objects met with in ritualistic art. So dominating is the place which the shrine occupies among religious objects, that the idea of a shrine is continually meeting us even in the art which is not formative. A sealed case is the centre of Catholic poetry, as it is the centre of Catholic ceremonial. One might even risk the assertion that Catholic art as a whole, in all its manifestations, décorates a sacred shrine. Such a thesis could easily be defended, if the word were used figuratively; but it holds good to a certain degree even in a purely literal meaning. It is

the author's hope that it will appear from the following inquiry that Catholic imagination, by means of a number of, to us, bizarre associations of ideas, has succeeded in bringing an ever-increasing part of the religious ideas into the image of a Sacred Shrine.

The detailed exposition of these associations of ideas cannot be presented until the last chapter of this book. Here, after the object of the work has been indicated, nothing remains to be done except to proceed to the inquiry, in which the reader will find — according to his opinion of the demonstration—a proof or a refutation of the author's idea. The inquiry, again, ought naturally to begin at that place round which the cult-system of the Church concentrates itself; and this place cannot be other than the altar, at which is celebrated the Mass, the supreme sacrament.

The altar is not, indeed, in a strict sense, the middle point of a church; but none the less does it mark its constructive, if not its geometrical centre. The chief altar is, as a rule, situate immediately below the keystone of the cupola or of the choir-vault.[6] In many cases it is underneath its place that the foundation stone of the Church has been laid.[7] The table for the Mass is, therefore, not a piece of furniture which has been placed in the building, but it is rather the kernel round which the building itself has been raised. Certainly in the Roman Catholic churches this circumstance does not stand out with full distinctness, because in them there have been set up not one but several altars. But the many side-chapels —which, it may be said in parenthesis, are met with even in the earlier Middle Ages[8]— cannot, however, conceal the importance of the one chief altar, which in virtue of its position dominates the entire plan

of the church. And if it is thus towards an altar that all lines of the building converge, it is also at the chief and at the small altars that the holiest objects have been collected. Pictures, sculptures, and decorative art combine to make the place round the Mass-table more beautiful and more venerable than any other in the church.

Among all the works of art and ritual instruments to be found here, we ought, if the presumptions of this inquiry are correct, to find some decorated shrines. And, indeed, we stand in front of the chief of the typical objects before we have time even to begin any proper search. For the Mass-table in itself is a covering for sacred contents, and it formerly even bore a name which indicated this characteristic. Gregory of Tours, when speaking of the altar, makes use not of the words "ara" or "altare," but of the word "arca," that is to say, box or ark.[9] That which in the Protestant Church is nothing but a table for the holy meal, in the Catholic Church is also a chest, which guards in its interior the precious relics of a saint.

How it has come about that the Mass-table thus fulfils a double object is a question which cannot be answered without entering into a detailed inquiry into the history of the Christian altar. The following chapter will be devoted, therefore, to the treatment of this, the first of the holy shrines of Catholic art.

CHAPTER II

THE ALTAR

If a star were confined into a tomb,
  Her captive flame must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up gave room,
  She'd shine through all the sphere.

HENRY VAUGHAN, *Sacred Poems.*

WHEN, under the guidance of the courteous Trappist monks, one wanders through the dark sepulchral chambers of San Callisto's Catacombs outside Rome, some time is always passed in one of the small underground chapels. The cicerone, who with evident satisfaction has made the utmost use of his release from his Order's seal of silence, here becomes more talkative than ever. If the least interest is shown in his narration, it becomes a whole lecture. A simple grave, let into the wall, whose flat lid is said to have been used as a Mass-table, forms the starting-point for a long discourse on the history of the ancient Basilica; and it is with triumphant satisfaction that the Trappist ends his lecture with the assertion that only in the Catacombs, in *his* Catacombs, can one learn to understand the architecture of the great churches overground.

This theory, which in a very popularised version is expounded to the tourists in S. Callisto, has not been

without advocates among experts who possess greater authority than the simple monk. From the very beginning of last century attempts have often been made to trace the origin of the peculiarities in the plans of Christian churches back to the arrangements in the crypts of the Catacombs. The cult received its character, it has been said, during the time the assembly was persecuted. The first fully-developed ceremonies were performed in the small subterranean chapels. When peace ultimately supervened and Christian worship was officially recognised, all the arrangements to which people had become accustomed during the persecutions of the heroic age are said to have been maintained. According to this theory the Altar preserved in its coffin-like shape the memory of that grave-table—an arcosol-tomb or a "sepolcro a mensa"[1]—at which holy Mass is said to have been performed in the Catacombs, and the church itself became in its ground plan an enlarged copy of the subterranean chapel. The Basilica, the official house of assembly overground, would thus have repeated on a larger and grander scale the leading architectural ideas of the hidden meeting-places.[2]

To the imagination there is something fascinating in the conception of a Church which had thus risen out of the interior of the earth and which, as soon as it had been freed from coercion, unfolded in the full light of day the same forms which it had of necessity adopted in the narrow and dark sepulchral chambers. Unfortunately, however, later and more critical research has led to results which make it impossible to support this tempting theory to the extent maintained by the older archaeologists and, following their example, by so many popular writers. Modern art historians have shown that the Catacomb chambers were much too

narrow to allow of space for public worship.[3] Besides this, they have even pointed out that the community had no cause to conceal its services underground. With the exception perhaps of the worst persecutions, the Christians were able during the time before Constantine, as well as after, to celebrate their worship overground, within certain fixed boundaries allotted to them. There is therefore, it is said, no reason to appeal to the Catacombs if we wish to explain the architectural plan of the Basilica. Although the question of the origin of the Christian type of church building has not hitherto been settled by any generally recognised theory, yet the majority of investigators are now agreed that this origin is not to be sought for in the subterranean chapel.[4] The idea again that the sepulchral chambers were used as churches is considered as a delusion which writers do not even give themselves the trouble of seriously opposing.

Those who have derived most of their knowledge of the earliest Christian architecture out of books, have no right to combat the professional verdict. It is therefore impossible to do other than sacrifice the romantic idea of a Church preparing in obscurity underground the forms it was to adopt when it had won a recognised position; but it does not follow from this that there is no justification for the contention of the older archaeologists as to the importance of the grave to Christian architecture. The possibility is not excluded that the architectural arrangements in the church were influenced by sepulchral models in some other way than was formerly supposed. Indeed, it appears, on a closer examination, that there is after all something worthy of consideration in the lecture of the enthusiastic Trappist. Without studying the dwelling-places of the dead, it is impossible to understand fully that house which is an

abode for the Divinity and a meeting-place for His community; and what is still more important in this connection is that only by referring to an influence from the sepulchral buildings can we explain how the Altar has received its characteristic form.

It must not be supposed that the type of altar, which is now to be found in nearly all churches, whether old or new, was prevalent during the early Christian period. Just as the primitive community possessed no special places of worship, but was content to celebrate its services in private houses, so there was no special liturgical furniture or implements. "Cur nullas aras habent, templa nulla, nulla nota simulacra?" so with reproachful surprise the heathen interlocutor asks in the dialogue of Minucius Felix.[5] The table at which the holy meal was distributed was, like the first communion table, a simple everyday object. No symbolical thoughts attached themselves to its form, and no decoration embellished its surfaces. During the first centuries it was considered that even wood was a perfectly satisfactory material for the manufacture of altars. When, later, the use of stone tables became more and more common, the old type was maintained, *i.e.* that of a smooth table-top supported by legs, between which the space was empty. It is true that there have not been preserved to our own day many of these altars which literally give a reason for the name communion *table*;[6] but a sufficiently clear knowledge of their form can be derived from the descriptions to be found in the literature of the Fathers, and from the representations to be found on old mosaics.[7]

Parallel with the development by which the church building separates itself from the profane house, there

occurs, however, another development by which the Mass-table separates itself in its form and its symbolic meaning from an ordinary table. In the fifth century, at about the time when the Christian church stood out as an independent type of architecture, the old table was replaced by an altar proper, that is, a box-shaped piece of furniture, whose top is supported by solid walls, and not by free legs.[8] And according to some theories, the new forms of both the church and the Mass-table can be attributed partly to the same causes.

That the church received the type of a Basilica was probably due to the influence of various heathen models, which it is not necessary to enumerate here, all the less as their relative importance is still a matter for dispute among archaeologists. In this connection we need adduce only that hypothesis according to which a part of the Basilica, the so-called apse, was developed from some small chapels which the Christians had erected at their burial-places as early as the pre-Constantine times. During the period when the new belief was not yet recognised as a religion on a level with others, the Christians preferred to meet at the tombs. They were sheltered from persecution within the radius sanctified by the presence of the dead. It has even been supposed that the community had from time to time been tolerated as a burial college.[9] After the heathen model, it was possible to erect in the neighbourhood of the graves small memorial "cellae"—most often placed right over one of the most important graves—in which service was celebrated without disturbance on the Saint's day.[10] After the persecutions had ceased, the meetings continued to be held at the old burial-places, from habit and respect for the dead; but as the original building soon proved insufficient to hold all the

faithful, a nave was added to the "cella," which now became the apsē of the church. According to Kraus, it is in such an arrangement that the origin of the Roman Basilica is to be sought.[11] It is indeed significant, that so many of the greatest and most famous churches of the fourth and fifth centuries are situated outside the towns, "extra muros," *i.e.* on the very space which had originally been set apart for the burial of the dead.[12] Thus, according to Kraus's theory, the church had grown out of a grave chapel—yet from a chapel above ground, and not, as was earlier believed, from the sacred chambers of the Catacombs. A dead-house had been the determining factor in the situation and arrangement of the Basilica, even if it had not been the model for its architecture.

No attempt will be made here to test the correctness of Kraus's theory, against which a number of weighty objections have been raised. The unsolved problem of the origin of the Basilica has been touched on only for the reason that the various, and more or less disputed, hypotheses have been supported by a number of indisputable facts which all demonstrate the close connection of the early Christian Church with the burial-place. This connection must have had its influence on the form and symbolism of the Altar. It may be taken for granted, *a priori*, that the Mass-table in a church which rises among graves and over graves has gathered round itself some of the ideas which were earlier associated with the graves. To explain in detail the course of this transference of ideas and of the accompanying transformation of the Altar, we must first of all examine the worship celebrated at the burial-places during the fourth and fifth centuries.

When Christianity became recognised under Constantine as the State religion, its cult was no longer so simple and pure as during the Apostolic period. However bravely the community had withstood the persecutions, it had nevertheless often found itself compelled to conceal its inner life under outer forms which offered a protective resemblance to heathen customs; and however unconscious and unintentional this mimicry may have been, yet it must in any case, like every other artifice, have gradually influenced nature itself. The circumstance that a Christian service was celebrated in burial-chapels had given the Church a kind of inviolable existence under the protection of the dead; but it had at the same time reacted on the purity of the Church's teaching. It is easy to imagine what conclusion would arise from the local connection between burial-place and temple. To the heathen onlookers it appeared obvious that the Christians worshipped their dead inside the chapels; and even for new converts it must have often been difficult to draw a strict distinction between the invisible God, to whom the worship was directed, and all the human presences around, which in their old religion they had been taught to reverence with the dutiful "pietas" of the survivor.

An external circumstance, such as the situation of the church building, would not, however, have alone sufficed to lead to any far-reaching results, if the grave had not in itself assumed an important place in the Christian's world of ideas. From death and the grave, so it ran, should the convert through baptism go forward to his new life (Rom. vi. 3-4; Col. ii. 12). By reason of these Pauline utterances, the symbolism of the grave has influenced both the ritual of baptism and the form of the ancient baptismal churches.[13] Still more obvious effects

must have sprung from all the ideas and customs connected, not with the symbolical grave to which Paul refers in his poetic word-picture, but with the actual house of the dead.

In this connection it must be remembered that the new religion, however sharply it opposed heathen ancestor-worship, was nevertheless of a nature directly to encourage reverence for burial-places. The Christian doctrine of immortality involved an increased devotion in approaching the rooms which were no longer looked upon as the abode of bloodless ghosts, but out of which, instead, the flesh itself would one day arise.[14] The pictures and inscriptions in subterranean Rome demonstrate clearly enough that the survivors' relation to the dead had won an increased intimacy through Christianity. When the dead, through various merits, had earned the gratitude of the community, tender recollection was soon changed to reverence and entreaty, and thus there arose on Christian soil a kind of cult of the dead, which approached in its expression the ancestor-worship of the heathen.

The times through which the Church had passed were to an unusual degree favourable for the development of such a cult. During the persecutions Christianity had acquired its heroic tales, which could well compare with the traditions of the heathen nations; and the new heroes, the martyrs, no less than the old demi-gods, became the object of the pious worship of their devotees. That this worship often took grossly superstitious forms appears from the generally prevalent custom of burying a dead body in the closest possible proximity to the bones of the martyrs, which were considered to afford by their propinquity special advantages to the later dead during the coming life.[15] But

the reverence for witnesses to the faith gave rise on the other hand to some peculiar ceremonies, which, although they were heathen in their origin, were none the less impressed with a Christian character. It was indeed nothing but pure ancestor-worship which lived on in the custom of offering wine and bread at the martyrs' graves—that custom for which even the pious Monica had to sustain the reproaches of Ambrosius;[16] and heathen, too, were the pilgrimages which were arranged at certain times to the memorial chapels in the cemeteries.[17] But there is something of the new religion's conception of immortality in the custom of laying small birthday tables, with festal decorations of palm leaves and red roses, on the martyr's grave, on the anniversary of the day when the witness, as with conscious paradox it was expressed, through his sacrificial death had been *born* into the new life. And Christianity set its seal on the ancient customs when it began to distribute the Sacrament to the pious pilgrims who collected round the graves at these memorial festivals.[18]

At this distribution of the Sacrament there had perhaps originally been used some special altars which had the old form of a movable table supported by legs, but the use of the grave itself as an altar-table must easily have suggested itself. Reference has already been made to the generally prevalent idea that the community down in the Catacombs celebrated its communion by the graves, which had their place under the arcosol-vaults, or by the so-called "sepolcri a mensa." It has also been stated that the latest investigations do not appear to strengthen this theory. But even if it were true, as Schultze categorically says, that during the persecutions not even any private cele-

bration of the "missa ad corpus" (*i.e.* any mass by a grave) ever took place,[19] yet it seems more than probable that the communion was distributed from that kind of great "martyr graves" erected under the open sky, which are still to be met with in many places in the East and in Africa.[20] And there is an indubitable proof that, at any rate during the post-Constantine period, a Roman catacomb-grave was used as a communion table. When Prudentius in his *Peristephanon* sings of S. Hippolitus's life, he also describes the grave in which the martyr's body had been laid :—

> Talibus Hippolyti corpus mandatur opertis
> propter ubi apposita est ara dicata Deo.
> Illa sacramenti donatrix mensa, eademque
> custos fida sui martyris apposita
> servat ad aeterni spem judicis ossa sepulcro,
> pascit item sanctis Tibricolas dapibus.

"This table which offers the Sacrament, covers the faithful martyr's bones that were laid here to await the Eternal Judge, and at the same time gives to the people by the Tiber spiritual food at the holy meals."[21]

It ought now to be evident why it was necessary to give an account of the graves and burial customs of the early Christians. However incomplete our knowledge of the oldest cult may be, and however much the decisions of specialists may contradict each other, yet from the material at hand, it is possible to deduce one irrefutable conclusion. Although we are compelled to refrain from any opinion as to the services which were possibly celebrated during the first century in the subterranean chapels, still we can venture to assert that, at the time when the great public churches arose, the sacrament of the altar was often distributed from a table surface cover-

ing a grave. No long explanations are necessary to demonstrate how important to the feelings of the faithful must have been the fact that two objects of worship were thus united in one place. The same stone that served to protect a sacred body afforded room for something still more sacred, the great sacrificial mystery. The "arca," *i.e.* the chest which contained the martyr's bones, became an "ara," *i.e.* a table bearing the flesh and blood of the divine man. As soon as these two ideas were once, perhaps from accidental reasons, associated, a conscious effort was made in all churches to bring the altar into the closest possible connection with the grave.

It is this effort which lay at the root of the development of the altar-type. The different forms which the Mass-table has received have been determined by the attempt to connect this table with the grave of a saint. When the definite form appears, the connection has been replaced by complete identity; but this final development was preceded by a number of transitional types, which show clearly how the table and the grave-chest gradually approximated. In order to give a clear idea of the symbolism of the altar, it is necessary to describe shortly these intermediate forms. We may, however, be excused for avoiding the difficult task of fixing the dates for the first appearances of the respective types. No attempt will be made in this connection to determine even their mutual order. The logical relation between simple and complex will be kept in view, rather than the chronological relation between earlier and later forms.

In those cases where the church was erected over subterranean graves, pains had probably been taken as far back as the first century to place the altar right

above the principal grave. When later it was desired to connect further these two sacred objects, it was easy to open a path from the floor of the church to the lower sanctuary. Such "aditus ad sanctos" have been found in a large number of the old Roman churches. This arrangement is very important for the history of ecclesiastical architecture. It may be regarded as the first model for the stairs which, in so many of both the older and the more recent churches, connect the apse with the subterranean crypt, that curious equivalent to the old catacomb chapel.[22] On the actual form of the Mass-table, however, the "aditus ad sanctos" could in itself have no influence. It can easily be imagined that the altars, which were connected by a stair-path with the grave, continued to retain their form of a table, between the legs of which the space was free.

The case was quite different in churches which were erected around a sarcophagus above ground. If in them the altar was placed close to the grave, there was naturally no need to open any path from the one holy place to the other. The table raised its surface, it may be imagined, a little in front of and above the sarcophagus-chest, which was thus enclosed between its legs. That is to say, an arrangement had been reached which corresponded to the description of the heavenly altar seen by the author of the Apocalypse :—

"Et cum aperuisset sigillum quintum, vidi subtus altare animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei, et propter testimonium quod habebant." "And when He (the Lamb) had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Apocalypse, vi. 9).[23]

The grave, or to use the ecclesiastical expression, the "confessio," stood like a little cabinet under the table.

Its gable afforded room for rich decorations, for which the heathen "cippa" must have served as model. As this ancient type of grave always had in its front an opening, through which the funeral urn was introduced into the little chamber of the dead, so too the Christian "confessio" was furnished with a door or a window which made it possible to look in upon the sacred relics.[24]

There has been preserved no small number of altar-tables enclosing between their supports a little martyr-cabinet.[25] It must not, however, be taken for granted that the "confessio" would in all these cases be a sarcophagus which was originally situated under the open sky and over which the church was later erected. It is only on theoretic grounds that we can suppose that old graves were enclosed by the altar-table without being subjected to any alteration. And it must further be recognised that the hypothesis of such a development is not indispensable to the explanation of the history of the altar. Judging from the dimensions and form of the martyr-cabinet, it is probable that the sacred relics were in most cases specially transferred to their position under the altar, and that on the model of the "cippa" a new repository was there set up for them.

Such a transference of the bodies of martyrs was the most practical of all means for bringing the altar and the grave into connection with one another.[26] And when this expedient had sometimes been made use of, the ultimate solution of the problem must have suggested itself spontaneously: the body of the martyr was placed between the legs of the altar-table, and these legs were connected by solid walls; or the table surface was supported not by separate legs, but by

four walls, and the holy relics were enclosed within these walls.[27] Thus the Mass-table was merged in the grave-chest, *i.e.* it was now the "ara" which became an "arca," and the place from which the sacrament was distributed coincided with the place at which the remains of saints were worshipped.

Hitherto our concern has been only with church buildings erected in the neighbourhood of cemeteries. One might therefore imagine that the whole of the development here sketched has had no general importance for Christian architecture. So great, however, was the influence exercised on Christian ritual by the grave cult, that the arrangements of the sepulchral churches were, before long, imitated even in the Basilicas situated within the town walls. The chest form gradually became the dominant one among Christian altars, and what is more important, the Mass-table became a reliquary, not only in its outer shape, but also in its idea. It was considered, perhaps on the basis of the passage from the Apocalypse quoted above, that an altar was not complete unless it concealed under its surface some sacred bones. This claim, again, was not difficult to satisfy after people had begun to divide the bones of martyrs into small pieces in order to fulfil the growing needs of saint-worship. Some such fragments were introduced under the surface of the altar in a square space which received the name of "sepulcrum," and which was covered by a little marble slab—the so-called "sigillum." The grave and its seal thus became marked out on the Mass-table, and the custom of enclosing relics in the altar became so general that to-day it would be difficult to find many altars in the whole of Catholic Christendom that do not conceal some sacred bones.[28] The Mass-liturgy itself refers to

the presence of these hidden sanctuaries. Before the priest begins his celebration he kisses the altar, and beseeches God's mercy "in the name of the holy men who rest here-under."[20]

After the altar had once received the form and meaning of a grave-chest, the type underwent no more important variations. Only two kinds still claim special attention. The one kind is the great "ciborium" altar, the other is the small "travelling" or "portable" altar.

The "ciborium" altar, as it is met with in a number of Italian churches, is not so much a piece of liturgical furniture as a special building within the great temple.[30] The altar is surrounded by four columns, one at each corner, which support a flat or vaulted roof. This canopy again is crowned by a pyramidal superstructure, the so-called "tegurium." The columns are often covered with inscriptions and ornamentation, the architraves or the arches which connect them are richly decorated, and the outer roof is embellished with small colonnades. From the inner roof, lamps and golden wreaths hang down over the altar. In the "ciboria" that are seen in churches to-day, the space between the columns is free, but it appears from certain old pictures and from marks on the columns of some of the "ciboria" preserved, that the altar space had earlier been closed in by movable curtains.[31] It was thus a complete little house surrounding the place for the altar sacrament.

It is not difficult to discover some purely liturgical ideas which may be considered to a certain extent to have supplied the motive for these peculiar arrangements. The roof of the "ciborium" serves, as has often been pointed out, to protect the Holy of holies from defilement, and the miraculous element in the sacramental transformation is set forth all the more impressively if

the miracle is performed behind drawn curtains. These points of view have certainly had their importance, but it is incredible that they should by themselves have given rise to so complicated and imposing an edifice. One is inclined to think, therefore, that older architectural types must have offered some model which was imitated in the "ciborium" altar; and such a model is easily found as soon as we fix our attention on the fact that the altar is a grave-chest at the same time as it is a Mass-table.

There are, in fact, some Christian forms of grave which in their essentials correspond with the "ciboria." When a grave was erected under the open sky it was usually given the form of an antique sarcophagus containing the body of a dead man. Probably these sarcophagi were placed by preference in the shadow of trees encircling the holy place;[32] but when no such natural shade was available, a special roof might be raised over the grave, *i.e.* a saddle-shaped or pyramidal superstructure was erected, supported by four columns connected with each other by architraves or arches.[33] This form of grave, which was especially common in North Africa, seems to have been used very often in heathen times, and the type is familiar to those who have seen the tombs of the Scaligeri at Verona and of the Professors at Bologna. If these edifices erected under the open sky are compared with the great "ciboria," it must indeed be admitted that there are differences in their proportions and embellishment, but none the less the two forms resemble one another as two expressions of the same idea. The pointed-saddle or tent-roof of the "ciborium," which by its shape is peculiarly fitted to carry off rain, suggests, so it appears, a place in the open air where it had been

necessary to raise a shelter against rough weather. We seem to see how the tomb had been removed from the open air into the church, to form there a little temple of its own within the larger one.

But there is yet more to see in an old "ciborium." A grave, which is sheltered by a roof and at which holy meals are set forth, is something that we may find in other religions beside the Christian. The primitive temple, consisting often of nothing but a simple roof rising over a grave, lives on in the "ciborium" within the walls of a Christian church. The original ritual connected with ancestor-worship has been developed and transformed in the course of religious progress; but, none the less, it has left its architectural forms as an inheritance to the new religion, which should, according to its theory, make an end of all worship of the dead.

If the "ciborium" altar recalls by its dimensions a house rather than a table, the travelling altar, on the other hand, is much too small to be characterised as an article of furniture.[34] As the name denotes, its purpose is to render possible the celebration of Mass for those who reside at a great distance from churches. It is an altar made portable and compressed into the smallest possible shape; but, however small it is, it lacks none of the qualities essential to a complete Mass-table. The surface of the table is represented by a small and specially consecrated stone slab, which is fitted into a frame of expensive and richly-decorated metal work. This slab again forms the lid of a box in which sacred relics have been enclosed, often selected from among the bones of the guardian saint who is at rest in the home-church of the traveller. When the first missionaries in heathen lands, or the Crusaders far away in Syria, celebrated their Mass over a travelling

altar of this kind, their ceremony was as complete as if it had been performed within a church. They had brought with them the church, or at any rate the essential part of the church, in the shape of this little article, which could be held in a man's hand or fixed to his saddle; and in front of these small shrines, just as in front of the imposing altar-buildings, homage was done to a grave containing the earthly remains of saints. Whether small or great, the Catholic Mass-tables are always, therefore, to the mind if not to the eye, a kind of case for precious contents; and the ideas connected with the abode of the dead remain for all time bound up with the Church's principal place of worship.

CHAPTER III

THE RELICS

Et c'est pourquoi je dis que de chaque contour
Émanent des reflets, des pellicules frêles,
Feuilles sans épaisseur, décalques si fidèles
Qu'ils gardent à jamais l'apparence des corps
Dont leur volage écorce abandonna les bords.

LUCRÈCE, *De la nature des choses*, trans. ANDRÉ LEFÈVRE.

FROM the development of the altar it has become clear that saint-worship, little by little, mingled with the Mass ritual, and that the Mass-table itself was finally transformed into a saint's shrine. This result, however, does not represent the whole of the influence exercised on the furnishing of the Catholic Church by the worship of the remains of the dead. The altar, which is itself a preserver of relics, supports or is surrounded by a number of other reliquaries, chests, capsules, shrines, or monstrances, which all serve to increase the sacredness of the place. To understand the principles of the disposition and embellishment of these sanctuaries we must know the ideas held by the faithful as to the miracle-working power of relics.

The doctrine of relics is connected indissolubly with that of the miracles of the saints. The earthly remains of a holy man would not be considered to exercise such wonderful results if it was not believed that the holy man himself had possessed a supernatural power.[1] We

must first, therefore, inquire into the ideas concerning the miraculous power of the saints. Afterwards it remains to show why this power was thought to survive in the saint's remains, and finally there comes the task of demonstrating how the belief in their power of working miracles gave rise to the preservation of relics in relic-cases, and to the exhibition of relic-cases in the church.

The miracle legends are in no way peculiar to Christianity. On the contrary, it can be shown that the Catholic saints in many cases received their wonder-working powers as an inheritance from Old Testament prophets[2] and heathen demi-gods[3]; and it is not only in the older religions of civilised peoples that analogies are found to the exploits of the great religious heroes. In all parts of the world, among primitive and barbaric tribes, legends of heroes, kings, and medicine-men are found corresponding in essentials with the Christian traditions. Nor is there any need to suppose that these legends were borrowed by one nation from another. The conditions of the correspondence are to be found most easily in the psychology of primitive and barbaric man, or, more correctly, in the psychology of that mental life which lives on continuously, as something primitive or barbaric, among civilised mankind.

There is even one article in the doctrine of the saints' power that we can adopt without being guilty of any superstitious attitude. We do not write ourselves down as primitive if we confess our belief that personalities which are strong and healthy, or good and wise—in a word, physically or morally superior—exercise an immediate influence upon those around them. In intercourse with them, all except the envious feel

themselves fresher, brighter, and more alive than usual. Such results can be observed even in an age that offers but few opportunities of contact with saint or hero. It is therefore easy to understand that the great martyrs and ascetics strengthened by their demeanour the courage of the faithful, and that among the latter there might easily arise a subjective illusion as to the power of the saints to cure diseases or to ward off misfortunes. The further idea that not only the saints themselves, but even all objects that awoke memories of them, were able to exercise an influence favourable to life, could be explained as a consequence of suggestion.

Though we admit that in some cases the experience of effects of illusion and suggestion has contributed to root the belief in the miraculous power of the saint, we must immediately assert that the legends themselves contain no allusions to such mental factors. Popular superstition, like religious belief in miracles, is obviously based on purely materialistic ideas. In pious legends there is no talk of mental conditions, and as a rule no special faith is presupposed in those who experience the effect of the miracle. People are persuaded that the mere physical contact exercises a healing, strengthening, and favourable influence. The magical person, or to use a more orthodox term, the pious thaumaturge, is considered to be in possession of some peculiar physical power which is imparted from him through material effluxes to all those who directly or indirectly come into contact with his external being. The pressing of his hands on a head, the touching of the hem of his garment when he passes by, and even the shadow cast by his figure, can transmit influences from him to those who come in his way. Such purely magical miracles are often reported in the Acts of the

Apostles (v. 15; viii. 7; xix. 12), although, on the other hand, both Peter and Paul frequently dwell on the importance of faith in healing the sick (iii. 4; xi. 34; xiv. 9).

Even in the canonical account of Paul's journeys, a miracle is recorded which for incredibility is second to none of the grossest legends of sorcery in popular superstition. At Ephesus, so it runs, when the people could not bring their sick to the Apostles, they placed on their beds handkerchiefs or pieces of cloth that had earlier been in contact with the saint's body. "And the sick were healed of their diseases and the evil spirits left them" (xix. 12). It was, it seems, not even necessary to see the miracle-worker himself, for his power transmitted itself through space by means of material instruments, which—so the case was interpreted—had been saturated with healing radiations from his being.

In the Biblical legends of the healing of the sick by Peter, Paul, and John, the most important kinds of saint-miracles are exemplified. The martyrs and ascetics, indeed, performed even more wonderful things than the Apostles, but the principles of their miracles were the same as those at work in the story of Peter's shadow and Paul's handkerchiefs. From these principles can be deduced not only the doctrine of the power of the saints themselves, but also that of the miraculous influence of the relics, through which saints live and work even after their death. For it is clear that the relics are considered potent in the same way as are the small pieces of cloth which, according to the Acts of the Apostles, had been in contact with Paul's body. Time and space are alike unable to destroy the might of the saint's being, and everything which has constituted a part of him,

or has been in contact with him, gives out miraculous power after the saint himself has left the earth. Such an argument appears irrational and meaningless to the modern mind, but it appears to be irrefutable, in a strictly logical sense, if it is placed in connection with that world-philosophy which lies at the basis of primitive superstition.

Ethnological research has long ago succeeded in bringing all the magical customs of savage and barbaric peoples under a common explanation. In the doctrine of "sympathetic magic" has been found the theory which is unconsciously applied by all "shamans" and sorcerers both in earlier times and to-day.

As its name denotes, sympathetic magic originates from the belief in a *common suffering*. The magician thinks himself able, by the operations he undertakes upon one thing, to influence another thing connected with the first by a magical solidarity. According to superstitious ideas such a solidarity exists between all beings, objects, and phenomena which stand towards one another in a relationship of *contact* or *similarity*. These two relations, contact and similarity—which, as is well known, determine in psychology the two classes of associations of ideas—lie at the root of two kinds of magic: one kind in which the sorcerer makes use of objects that have been in contact with the person or thing he wishes to influence, and another kind in which he makes use of images or imitations of living beings, things or motions.

Ethnological and folklorist investigators have, as a rule, regarded the magics of contact and similarity as two forms which in their essentials have nothing in common. But just as psychologists attempt to reduce

all associative processes to one common type of association, so also we ought to be able to show one common and fundamental idea from which the various magical customs may be deduced. Such a first principle is easily found in primitive man's materialistic conception of the bond of contact and similarity.

That all things which have once formed parts of a given whole are throughout the future connected both with one another and with the great whole, and that consequently by affecting one of the parts not only the other parts but also the whole itself can be influenced,—this belief could not have developed unless it had been thought that the essence of a thing stood in a purely physical sense in permanent connection even with all the parts that have been separated from the whole in question. A primitive magician has naturally not formulated his reasoning in any clear ideas. He could not himself say why he thinks that he hurts an enemy by, for example, burning or piercing a part of his clothing. But if he were able to express his dim conceptions in philosophic language, he would probably say that the clothes worn by his enemy are penetrated through and through by bodily radiations from the hated man's being. He would assert that these radiations form a continuous chain of material connection between the instrument of magic and its victim, and that by affecting the chain at one of its ends he can influence its beginning. In a word, he would develop a materialistic theory of effluxes which eternally connect the whole and all its parts with each other.

According to primitive ideas, a similar chain of effluxes links images with their originals, for the picture is to the undeveloped mind nothing but a

radiation, a decortication of the thing. The first pictures seen by savages, the shadows on the ground and the reflection in the water, lead quite spontaneously to such an interpretation; and the shadow and the reflection have become the types to which all other representations are referred. Every object, which in virtue of its similarity awakes the idea of another object, is explained as a sort of decortication of this object. If a man gets possession of a counterfeit of a thing, he thinks that he has at the same time stolen a part of the essence of the thing in question. The fear that exists among all uncivilised people of allowing a portrait of themselves to be taken is thus nothing but a fear of losing through the portrait a part of their being. Ethnological literature offers a mass of instances which cannot be explained in any other way.[4]

It may perhaps be objected that reality ought often to have given the lie to so naïve an idea. Undeveloped man, however, does not allow his ideas to be corrected by reality. His way of looking at things has given him an explanation of phenomena, which is sufficiently complete and logical for his purpose. One is the less inclined to be astonished at his contentment, when one considers that the materialistic doctrine of effluxes has even served as the basis of consistent and logical systems. The Epicurean world-philosophy was based on an idea that not only shadows and reflections in a mirror, but also dream pictures and ideas, consisted of certain thin membranes, which were continually thrown off from the surface of things and spread themselves in every direction through space. In the fourth book of his great poem, *De rerum natura*, Lucretius has cleverly applied this doctrine of decortications to the phenomena of optics, acoustics,

and psychology. In doing so he has merely systematised the dim ideas about the corporeality of sight- and sound-pictures, which are found among all savage tribes and which still live on sporadically among the civilised nations. It is enough in this connection to refer to the popular fear of losing something by having one's photograph taken, to the Indian traditions as to the sacred places at which Buddha's shadow has fixed itself eternally on a mountain wall,[5] and to the popular Celtic belief that the waters in Brittany, the old land of romance, still throw back the reflection of the fairy Viviane.[6]

Lucretius has not evolved any magical conclusions from his theory, and he makes no mention whatever of any solidarity between things and the emanations that are detached from them; but from his clear and logical exposition we can get to understand that when once the idea of magical solidarity had been embraced, *similarity* must appear as no less natural a means of sorcery than *contact*. Through images a man could, in the most literal meaning of the word, put himself in contact with an object. From effluxes, emanations or peelings-off, there was constructed an interminable system of material links through which all wholes were bound up with their parts and all originals with their representations. By the application of one and the same fundamental idea the primitive magician was able—by the help, it is true, of two different methods—to exercise his power over all things of which he had procured for himself a *part* or a *picture*. His belief appears to us devoid of any reasonable basis; but we ourselves own to ideas of this kind when, under the influence of strong feeling, we sink back into the primitive soul-life, *i.e.* when admiration or love have

made us fetish- or picture-worshippers. We then experience for a few moments before a souvenir, a relic, or a portrait the same illusion of possession which was confused by uncivilised man with an actual power over a beloved or hated being—only we do not allow ourselves to be led into supposing any objective correspondence to our subjective sensation; and we do not —here comes in the decisive difference—embody the psychological association between the ideas in any belief of a material union between the things.

It is not necessary here to give a more detailed account of the theory of sympathetic magic. If some points in this folk-philosophy have been insufficiently explained, the Catholic worship will offer many opportunities for a completer exposition. For the popular superstitions about the power of relics, which were taken up and were theoretically justified by the fathers of the Church, are at bottom as materialistic as primitive magic. All the forms adopted by relic-worship have their exact correspondence in the system of magic.

To begin with the simplest kind of magic by contact, it is easy to understand why it was considered that the possession of a saint's body or of some of his bones carried with it advantages similar to those which would have been gained by placing oneself under the protection of a living saint: in the same way as the Christian martyr-worshippers, the ancient Greeks collected relics of their demi-gods, and transferred them to "heroon" chapels.[7] They thus applied the same principle as the magician who seeks to make an end of his enemy by destroying some locks of his hair, some clippings of his nails, or a lost tooth. It is true that black magic has hate for its motive power, while the white magic has admiration or love; but none the less religion and

magic build in this respect on the basis of a common thought. It has long been generally recognised that the heathen gods were thought to be bound to the places where their images were guarded.[8] Relics fulfilled the same purpose in the case of the saints, probably with still greater effectiveness.[9] It is perfectly clear from the hagiographic legends that with the bones of a saint one took the saint himself into one's service. One was certain of his assistance, because the holy man could not be other than present, wherever his relics were guarded.[10]

By transferring some relics to the church, the faithful had made the great dead a member of their own community. He lived with them, the church became his house,[11] and the interests of the nation became his.[12] He appropriated the language of his new country,[13] and he assisted its struggles with patriotic zeal. When the citizens were successful in their wars, it was the saint who was given the credit for the victory.[14] Merits of this kind could certainly not often be ascribed to the Western saints, among whom the Roman martyrs in particular showed themselves sadly incapable of shielding their city; but in the East, where hostile attacks were still frequently repulsed, the belief in the saint's military prowess grew with every new victory. A holy relic was considered as the strongest fortification of a place. Saint Jacob of Nisibea, for example, who during his life had by his pious prayers warded off the onslaught of the Persians, afforded after his death a better protection to his city than its lofty walls and wide river. His body became, to quote Ephraem Syrus's ingenious conceit, a rampart without the town although it was hidden within it; it was a living spring inside the town which guarded Nisibea when the river at its boundary had failed it.[15]

As the relics had so much practical importance, it was not of course always for purely religious reasons that people strove to acquire them. Piety was connected with utilitarianism, and the collecting of relics took forms hardly consistent with reverence for the saint. Voyages of discovery and invasions were undertaken in order to get possession of precious remains. People made war on a knuckle or a finger-bone, as war is now made on provinces and countries. The body of the saintly ascetic Jacob became a subject of strife even before he had died.[16] It was not considered sinful for a man in his pious zeal to rob or plunder neighbouring towns in order to take some luck-bringing object home to his own village, and trade was carried on in what had once been pious servants of God as in shop wares. If to Christian ideas there is anything offensive in this, consolation should be afforded by the fact that the traffic was usually conducted by unbelieving Jews.

In these varieties of saint-worship we have to do with a usury levied upon a popular superstition, which was often condemned by the Church authorities. The more enlightened among the old Fathers of the Church discouraged, as far as lay in their power, both the trade in relics and the forgery of them, the latter having developed into a regular industry[17] as early as the time of Augustine; but the exchange or giving away of particular martyrs' bones was not disallowed. On the contrary, it was considered that the Church's interest gained by this spread of relics. The cult grew in unity if one and the same saint was worshipped at several different places.[18] In harmony with that mystical conception of ubiquity which prevails in the doctrine of the sacrament, it was not thought in any way unnatural

that the saint should be present at the same time in all the places where his relics were preserved. The Eastern Church showed itself particularly willing to distribute fragments of bone from all the saints whom people in the West were anxious to worship.

The Roman See followed a policy that was not quite so generous. Evidently it was recognised as most profitable to possess the holy objects of worship in their entirety. When, as was often the case, a request for relics was received, it was pleaded that the rest of the dead martyrs would be disturbed if their bones were cut into pieces.[19] None the less the pious worshippers were gratified with the gift of some objects that had absorbed, and been saturated with, the radiations of the relics. Little pieces of cloth were placed for a time in the graves of Peter or Paul, and thence sent forth round the world as relics of the Apostles.[20] These sanctuaries of the second order, if we may so call them, were considered to be effective in the same way—if not in so high a degree as the sacred bones themselves.[21]

Thus the Church, led on perhaps by the apostolic narrative of Paul's handkerchiefs, had recourse to that form of sympathetic magic, according to which, in the absence of parts of the victim's body, such as locks of hair or nails, the result is attained by means of pieces of clothing. A method was used which corresponded in its principle with the procedure of primitive sorcerers. But the Catholic manufacture of relics is more interesting than any one of the magical customs of primitive men. It demonstrates with unsurpassable clearness how materialistic was the conception of the effects of relics. It was, as already mentioned, through a bodily radiation that the magic vehicle assumed a part of its subject's being. This radiation could not be seen, for it was an

invisibile; but it was not an *imponderable.* Therefore, when so important a matter as the procuring of holy relics was in question, people wished to be quite sure that the magical transference had really taken place. The small pieces of cloth were weighed before and after their rest on the sacred coffins; and when they were lifted up it was found that they had increased in weight—a thing, indeed, that is not entirely incredible, if we take into consideration the damp air down in the sepulchral chambers. According to the believer's interpretation the increase in weight corresponded to the miracle-working power added to the piece of stuff by the contact.[22]

It is natural that other objects besides cloth should serve as vehicles for the effluxes of relics. The oil in the lamps which burned at the martyrs' graves was considered capable of working miracles in the same way as the holy bodies; and if an ascetic read some prayers over a jar of oil, his power of working miracles was conveyed to the contents of the jar, which immediately increased in amount and flowed over the brim—a statement the correctness of which may be doubted, however positively it is asserted by Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours.[23] The earth around a holy grave was saturated by the radiations of the dead man, and thus became in its turn a means of healing. The water in which a relic was washed was preserved by the faithful and taken home to be used as medicine.[24] Moreover, the magical emanations never ceased to stream out from the holy object. Just as the bones of the martyrs and ascetics were considered to be imperishable, so they were considered to possess a never-ending supply of miraculous power.

The holiest relics, however, possessed still more

wonderful qualities. Not only could they radiate their being in an unceasing succession of effluxes without a weakening of their force; they could even share their actual matter without undergoing the least shrinkage. The sand on the spot from which the Saviour ascended into Heaven has not come to an end in spite of the fact that, for so many centuries, believers have taken home grains of it as a relic.[25] The holy cross allowed pilgrims to break pieces from its surface, and none the less remained as large and as complete as before.[26] According to popular belief, there were even saints who actually doubled themselves, in order that their relics should serve as many worshippers as possible. St. Baldred in Scotland, for example, had been the cause of strife between three communities, all of which desired to possess his body; but when one day they were about to take up the unfinished strife anew, the single body had been changed into three, all puzzlingly like one another. The holy man had taken care that no one of the rivals should be favoured at the expense of the others.[27]

Reasons could thus be quoted even for the fact that several specimens of similar relics of one and the same saint were worshipped at different places. It is a proof, therefore, of a defective knowledge of the consistency of Catholic doctrines to ridicule, as Protestants often do, the worship, for example, of the many holy nails, which would suffice for far more than one cross, or of the numerous thorns, which could not possibly find a place in a single crown of thorns.[28] The believers are not affected by this criticism; for them it is an undoubted fact that all the many relics are equally authentic.

As regards the last-mentioned objects, we need not even appeal to such extraordinary and fabulous explana-

tions as the miracle of St. Baldred's body. It is true that the sacred nails are said to have increased in number without any exterior prompting; but the majority of the thirty-six different examples[29] that are known to exist have probably, like the many thorns and the innumerable duplicates of the saints' clothing, been quite openly manufactured according to the correct method of procuring new relics. Some faithful copies of the authentic objects were made, and these copies were then set in contact with the original.[30] The effluxes communicated themselves through the contact, and the new relics were saturated with the power of the sacred object in the same way as the pieces of cloth which have already been mentioned; but they further possessed, in addition to the wonder-working qualities transmitted to them by contact, a miraculous power springing from their similarity to the original relic. Thus both the magic principles so often combined in the making of primitive religious pictures and ancestor-images, combined to make the secondary relics holy and wonder-working.[31]

It is not, as may perhaps be objected, too far-fetched to explain the Catholic doctrine of relics with the help of the similarity-magic of uncivilised peoples. The belief in the material connection between images and their originals was by no means uncommon in the first centuries of Christianity. The story of Peter, who healed sick people by his shadow, is evidence of a conception as materialistic as any of the primitive superstitions. In the whole of ethnological literature no more illuminating example of the idea that representations are effluxes from originals can be met with than the Christian legend of Veronica's napkin. This marvellous picture, which had itself been produced by a radiation from the Saviour's countenance, possessed

the miraculous power of being able, in its turn, to detach new pictures to the surface of objects with which it was placed in contact. According to one of the many variants of this famous legend, Ananias, who had been sent to Jerusalem to fetch the picture of the Saviour for the sick Persian king, during his return journey concealed his treasure one evening between some bricks; and when he took it up next morning, it turned out that the stones had received a clear impression of the sacred countenance. Thus the copy was able, by an automatic process, to copy itself; and, what is more remarkable, it was not through any mental impression, but through this purely physical contact that the pictures exercised their healing influences. In the story of King Agbar's deliverance from his leprosy, there is no mention of his having looked at the napkin. He seized the holy cloth, the tale runs, and pressed it against his face and his limbs, and in the same hour his discharge began to grow less and his strength returned.[32]

This materialistic picture-medicine has even been utilised by believing Catholics during far later periods. Thus the pious mystic Suso relates how he one day succeeded in curing a blind man by first rubbing his hands upon a wall, on which were painted the figures of some holy Apostles, and then touching the eyes of the sick man.[33] Although these pictures had not, like the impression on Veronica's napkin, and on the great "Sudaria" in Turin and Beşançon, been procured by a material detachment from the models themselves, yet they could still transmit healing powers in a corporeal way. The miraculous power of the pictures was of the same nature as that of the relics, and pictures were therefore, at any rate in the Eastern Church, entirely

on a par with the material remains of men and women.[34] As a consequence the copied relics were thought to possess, by reason of their likeness to the original, a part of the latter's miraculous force; and as a result of the same reasoning, people thought that they could protect their cities, their houses, and themselves no less efficiently by holy pictures than by holy bones. This conception has of course been of inestimable importance to the development of pictorial art.

The superstitious ideas which have been commented upon in this chapter have in themselves nothing to do with the artistic crafts of Catholicism; but they give us information about the contents of the reliquaries, and it is impossible to treat of a covering without first paying attention to the substance it conceals. In the next chapter it will appear that it is only by incessantly referring to magic by contact and magic by similarity that we can explain the principles of the shaping, the embellishment, and the arrangement of the relic-shrine.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIQUARY

Saints are like roses when they flush rarest,
Saints are like lilies when they bloom fairest,
Saints are like violets sweetest of their kind.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI, *All Saints.*

IT has been necessary to emphasise specially all the materialistic elements in the Catholic doctrine of relics. If we do not make ourselves acquainted with the purely corporeal manner in which the holy things are thought to communicate their help and healing, we cannot rightly understand the relation of the believer to the remains of the saints; nor can we understand why the relics were enclosed in reliquaries, set up in the churches, and exhibited to the faithful. For had the power of the relic been independent of all physical mediation, the precious bones would have been able to exercise their blessed influences in all circumstances. They would have protected their cities even though they lay hidden in an unknown grave, and people would have relied confidently on their help, had they only known that they were somewhere in their neighbourhood. This, however, was so little the case that, on the contrary, hidden relics were considered as a treasure non-existent for the community.[1] It was only after the sacred bones had been brought up into the light of day

that they began to perform their miracles. A region was exposed to misfortunes and diseases, however many relics it might contain within its boundaries; but it received powerful protection from the moment when the relics were discovered and set up for the worship of the faithful.

It would be natural to suppose that the relics were exhibited in order that the people might show them reverence. The saint could not, one is apt to imagine, give any attention to the needs of those who sought his help before the latter had put forward their desires in homage and prayer. Nevertheless, the invoking of the sacred remains does not play any decisive rôle in the old miracle stories. The legends relate, on the one hand, that the power of the relics does not depend upon such mental factors as belief or unbelief; and, on the other hand, that the miracle presupposes a sensuous communication between the relics and those who experience the effects of the miracle.[2] When any evil influence was averted, this was due, it is said, to the fact that the demons were frightened at seeing the remains of the holy men who during their lifetimes had withstood their attacks so victoriously.[3] "We carry the relic-case forward against the demons," it is said by Honorius Augustodunensis, "as the Children of Israel bore the Ark of the Covenant against the Philistines."[4] When again it was a question of strengthening weakness or healing an illness that was not due to demoniacal possession, the cure was transmitted by as simple a method. The patients were well aware of the fact that the relics could not exercise their influence telepathically. They were not content with praying to the holy bones at a distance, but they wanted to see them, and touch them or rub themselves against

them, in order to absorb in their being the healing effluxes. Just as people strove to touch martyrs while they lived,[5] so they contended to get as near as possible to their remains.

The early Christian martyr-shrines were in many cases accessible for such contact. If they were placed above ground people could embrace them with their arms and touch them with eyes, ears, and mouth.[6] If, again, they rested underground, a direct communication between the altar and the dead was often procured by the "aditus ad sanctos" already mentioned; and a still closer contact was possible in churches where the grave as a "confessio" lay directly under the altar-table itself. Through the door or window of the "confessio" building one could look in upon the relics and place one's body close to them; nay, one could even in some cases, as in the old Church of St. Peter at Rome, thrust one's entire head into the holy chamber.[7] There were also some altars of the later chest-type, with small openings in their walls through which the saint's bones peeped out;[8] but these forms became more and more rare. The orthodox altar came to be a closed room which contained relics indeed, but also *concealed* them in a small inaccessible grave.

When they rested under the communion-table the bones of martyrs and confessors fulfilled their function of effecting a union between the church and its protector—"its name-saint," as the term stands—which was woven stronger and stronger at each new celebration of the holy meal.[9] The saint became an invisible guest at the festivals of the community, and he was, through his participation in them, more and more closely bound to the community's interests. But if this sufficed for the general needs of the cult, it must often have been

unsatisfactory to individual believers that they could no longer see or touch the sacred remains. People were not content with the knowledge that the altar preserved relics, or that, as was often the case, relics were fitted into the vaulting stones or in the roof of the church tower.[10] They claimed to worship their saints in some special sanctuary which was not, like the altar-table, used for any other ritual purposes. They claimed that the relics should be preserved in such a way that the sacred bones themselves or their covering should be accessible not only to the thoughts of the faithful, but also to their eyes, and if possible to their touch.

This claim could easily be fulfilled when the number of holy objects had increased through the discovery and manufacture of relics. Then, in addition to the great saint-grave, *i.e.* the altar, churches could be provided with other movable saint-shrines for the exclusive purpose of relic-worship. Thus arose the various receptacles which, with their beauty of form and the richness of their colours, contribute so powerfully to the outer pomp of Catholic ritual.

From the purely aesthetic point of view the reliquary is more interesting than any of the objects which together constitute the liturgical apparatus. The history of the embellishment of this holy shrine embraces a considerable part of the development of decorative art. It touches upon all the most important kinds of the arts and crafts which were carried on during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—the carving of ivory, the chasing of gold and silver, the works in vermilion, *i.e.* gilded silver, and the setting of rubies, topazes, and emeralds, and, above all, of some kinds of stones no longer used in secular art, such as

the chrysoprase and that transparent crystal, the beryl. It affords examples of many ingenious ways of utilising shells, and mother-of-pearl, and even ostrich eggs, for relic-cases; and, above all, it contains a fascinating chapter on the artistic enamels, in which richly-coloured vitreous glaze has been poured into ornaments and figures, whose contours are formed by the darkly-rising ridges of the copper base. The gorgeous beauty of the embellishment of reliquaries is, indeed, often barbarically ostentatious, but in many cases it can compel unqualified admiration.

There can be no question here of giving an exact account of all the individual shrines which invite description by the splendour and grace of their form, or by the effect of their combination of colours. Of the number of varieties by which the reliquary is represented in the collections of churches and museums, only the most important will be discussed. In doing so, it is most natural to begin by distinguishing a considerable group of receptacles which had originally been manufactured for secular purposes.[11]

When the collecting of holy bones began, there did not of course exist any developed art of manufacturing reliquaries. People were often content to fit the bones or their fragments into simple boxes of lead, bone, or wood, on the covers of which they engraved a short description of the contents; but frequently they chose as receptacles for the holy objects some box or case which had formerly been used for quite another purpose. Thus it might happen that after Christianity had become a fashionable religion, the wealthy ladies of Rome emptied out the contents of their trinket-boxes and hid the blackened bones of some pious ascetic under the same cover that had formerly guarded their pearls and

brilliants; and during much later periods this custom of using heathen works of art as coverings for Christian contents was retained. Crusaders and pilgrims brought with them relics lying in costly cases and receptacles which they had procured in the East, and the Church took care of the shell as well as of the substance. The same liberality was shown with regard to the profane art of the European nations. As the Church on the whole rejected nothing—whether old folk-legends or heathen customs or motives of artistic decoration—so, too, it gave house-room to gems, receptacles, and implements which had either lost their use or no longer possessed any rightful owner.[12] Some small alteration was made in the object; an open goblet was closed by a lid, or a hole was bored in a breast-plate; a fragment of bone was introduced or fitted into the opening, and the worldly object was thus transformed into a holy shrine.[13] What is important as regards the history of art is that through a small alteration of this kind the object was preserved from destruction. During the time when no historic sense was directing peoples' activities, and when the comparative study of art was an unknown idea, the sacristies and altar-places fulfilled the task that has now been taken over by art-museums; and they fulfilled it so well that in many cases they have preserved for us valuable instances of—*e.g.* oriental —technique which but for them had been lost to us. All this exotic and barbaric production, which is still to be found in the collections of relics in churches, is, of course, of indisputable aesthetic interest; but it teaches us nothing of the art which is Catholic in its origin and its aim.

The reliquaries proper can easily be distinguished from receptacles which were subsequently adapted to

their holy purpose. They are by no means less beautiful than the secular cases; on the contrary, only the purest materials were considered good enough to enclose the bones of martyrs and confessors, for the bones in themselves were "of more worth than precious stones, and finer than purified gold,"[14] and, as the legends relate, revealed their sanctity by a sweet odour. Superstitious worship and pious, devout reverence thus led the craftsmen to put forth in the making of reliquaries all the skill of which they were capable; but these holy shrines further possessed in their shape certain features clearly illustrating their religious purpose.

The form that lay nearest to hand, when a chamber had to be prepared for the body of a holy martyr or ascetic, was naturally that of a box. It is probable that many of the oldest relic-shrines were nothing but simple coffins of stone or wood. As soon, however, as these sanctuaries began to be exhibited in churches, the necessity of decorating their surfaces must have been felt. After the model of antique and early Christian sarcophagi, people began to divide the walls into compartments separated from one another by pilasters and half-columns, and adorned with pictures from the life of the saint within. The lid received, likewise on the model of sarcophagi, the form of a saddle-roof, and the resemblance to a house, when once people's eyes had been directed to it, was more and more emphasised by the ornamentation. When the "capsa" —such is the name for this saint's shrine—had reached its full development, it often presented the appearance of a small church: a simple or even a many-aisled Basilica, with socle, arcades, and projecting saddle-roof, or a Gothic cathedral with flying buttresses, pinnacles,

and ridge-turrets. Just as the Church had often been looked upon as a grave-shrine for the saint, so too the saint's shrine was looked upon and represented as a church.[15]

This type of reliquary, which one can imagine as developed out of a sarcophagus, was, however, used in a smaller size for relics which could not have filled a proper chest. Thus there are many small golden churches which were wrought and decorated solely in order to enclose some precious and sacred bone-fragment. But it is natural that, in the business of preserving small relics, people were not bound to that type of case which had been used for the intact bodies of martyrs. A little piece of bone could, for example, be placed in a cylindrical or polygonal box, whose walls and lid were adorned with engraved or sculptured ornamentation. This lid, too, could after some remodelling assume the form of a roof; a conical tent-roof or a cupola. Thus the box appeared like a tower, or in its most finished stage, as a central temple. The sacred bone rested in a treasury which recalled the oriental tombs and sepulchral churches.[16] We see how the connection of ideas between the great and the small bone-houses expresses itself step by step in the outer shape of the reliquaries.

The shrines in the form of towers or churches, so important in Catholic symbolism, do not, however, give any idea of the kind of bones which are preserved in them. In this respect the so-called "topical reliquaries" are much more interesting to the spectator. In them the covering corresponds faithfully to the contents. A finger of silver or gold encloses a finger-bone, a half-moon-formed piece of gold contains the fragment of a rib, and a foot holds parts of the lower extremities. The fibulae—which are often to be found among relics—

are enclosed in an arm, or more properly in a sleeve, of metal, from which protrudes a hand with the fingers extended in a gesture of blessing. In many cases, in order to make possible a complete identification of the precious remains, there has been placed between the fingers the characteristic attribute of the saint in question. The skull-bone was fitted naturally into a head of wood, stone, or metal, and thus arose "hermae" or busts concealing in their interior some fragmentary relic. When once people had advanced so far along the road from shrine to image, it was an easy step to form statues which reproduced the saint's entire shape and housed some of his bones.[17] Contact had, to use the terminology of magic, allied itself with similarity. When looking, for example, at the curious busts in the Church of St. Ursula at Cologne, each of which has under its crown a fragment of skull, we are reminded of the great ancestor statues in New Guinea, which were made to support or enclose the skull-bones of the dead.[18] Or, if we prefer to seek our comparisons nearer at hand, we can think of the Etruscan urns in the form of busts, which at the same time preserved a man's features and his earthly remains.

These resemblances, however, striking as they are, should not lead us to a complete identification. It is difficult in each separate case to decide whether it was a conscious magical intention or a purely aesthetic impulse that lay at the root of the custom of making relic-holders in the shape of busts and statues. During the later Middle Ages, and even more during the Renaissance, the enclosing of sacred bones was indeed considered as a purely artistic business, which people sought above all to fulfil in the most beautiful way possible. Reliquaries were collected as curios by many connoisseurs

who had no belief at all in the miraculous power of the holy bones, and probably they were often made by sculptors and goldsmiths who themselves did not retain the primitive world-view. But even if one does not like to see in the anthropomorphic reliquaries anything but the result of the free play of artistic fancy, yet it must be remembered that in this, as in so many cases, the aesthetic effect corresponds to what at earlier stages of development was looked upon as a magical efficacy. And there is no doubt that to the pious saint-worshippers both the worth of the relics and their miraculous qualities were increased, when they were able from the very shape of the outer cover to receive an impression of the presence of the saint.

The topical saint-shrines, which in our presentation of the subject were the connecting link in the transition to the preserving of relics in busts and statues, possess this advantage, that it is possible to see *what* bones are preserved in them; but the sacred contents themselves can *not* be seen. The covering is not, indeed, able to exclude the miraculous power, and it has been saturated with such a number of effluxes that it could perform miracles on its own account;[19] but the fact that the relic is completely hidden from their eyes is none the less unsatisfactory to the faithful. Superstition and pious reverence claim to behold their object. In order to fulfil this claim, a little window, covered with transparent crystal, has frequently been let into the saint's shrine;[20] and during the later Middle Ages a further step was taken by manufacturing entire reliquaries out of glass. The small cylindrical shrine—if we may use this expression—was supported and surrounded by an edifice wrought in metal, reproducing in miniature motives from the church architecture of the period.

This rich framework is, however, so arranged that it does not conceal the sacred bone, the whole length of which shines out through the glass. A saint-shrine of this kind is not a "relic-hider"—a "relikgömma," to use the old Swedish expression—but on the contrary a "relic-shower." Therefore it bears in ecclesiastical terminology the same name, "monstrance," as was borne by the objects which, coming into use at a later time, play so important a part in the cult of the sacred Host.[21]

The same principles that determined the formation of the reliquaries are responsible also for the ways in which these are kept and exhibited. Whether the holy bone itself is hidden or visible, the believer must at any rate be able to see its shrine. Often indeed, from a regard for their value, the wonder-working objects were locked up in chests and cabinets in the sacristies; but even in these cases care was taken that not only the priests, but also the community, should occasionally enjoy the privilege of viewing the relics. On the saints' birthdays—their death-days according to secular terminology—when their remains were considered to have greater healing properties than at any other time,[22] the sacred bones had to exercise their powers over all the sick and unhappy ones who streamed to the church to be cured of their sufferings. Thus in la Sainte Chapelle in Paris—a building which, large as it is, can only be considered as a monster-reliquary—there has been left for this purpose in the stained glass windows one uncoloured pane, through which the relics were shown to the crowd outside.[23] On the day of Mary's Assumption, the sacred girdle at Prato was exhibited from a pulpit which was erected specially for that purpose outside the church, and which was built by Michelozzo and adorned with reliefs by Donatello. And in the

Breton village of St. Jean du Doigt, on every midsummer day people can take part in a great "pardon," when John the Baptist's finger is immersed in the great churchyard fountain, in order that the sick may be able to rub their bodies with the water thus saturated with the saint's effluxes. Other relics go to meet those who seek their help, when they are carried in procession on festival days through the streets of the towns. The great chests are borne on litters, and the "monstrances" are held in the hands of Church officials. Thus the bones of the dead are able to spread their blessings over wide circles and to radiate health over all those who cross their path.

It is clear, however, that people could not content themselves with these exhibitions of relics on feast days. A possibility of partaking of a saint's help must be provided for the daily church-goers. For this purpose it was necessary to expose some relics in a visible place within the church itself. Now of all such places there is none so conspicuous as the altar, which, whether in the nave or in one of the small side-chapels, is placed at that point to which the gaze of the worshipper is irresistibly drawn. The surface of the altar, however, cannot afford room for any bulky objects over and above those necessary for the celebration of the sacrament. The relic-shrine must, therefore, unless it is quite small, be placed as near the altar as possible without thereby encroaching on its space.[24] The attempt to unite these two conflicting claims has given rise to some peculiar arrangements that have been of immense importance in the development of art-forms.

When it was desired to give a dominating position to the great saint-chest, which naturally could not be laid on the altar itself, there was only one expedient

available. It was placed behind the altar on a substructure high enough to make the sanctuary visible all over the church. By an arrangement of this kind the faithful were enabled to move freely round the relics and even to place themselves under them, so that they could receive their effluxes from every direction.[25] It has even been asserted that the suppliants utilised the space between the bottom of the shrine and the floor of the church for carrying out the old magical idea, according to which sickness is believed to be healed by the sufferer creeping through a narrow opening, *e.g.* under stones or between the branches of trees.[26] For the purposes of saint-worship itself this disposition was as advantageous as could be desired, but it was also very effective architecturally and decoratively. The richly-ornamented chest which occasionally, like the old sarcophagi, was crowned by a little roof of its own, rises with this, its "ciborium," high over the Mass-table, and from its position dominates the whole field of vision in the church. It is the second great grave of the Catholic cult; and as regards the eye, if not the mind, it often asserts itself at the cost of the altar-chest. By the history of its development this roofed and lofty-rising saint-shrine, as seen in some old French churches, further reminds us of the influence acquired by the worship of the dead in Catholic ritual.

The decorative whole, formed by the table of the high altar and the gable of the great saint-shrine facing the nave, is from the aesthetic point of view the most interesting part of the fittings of the old churches; but it is also worthy of attention from the point of view of the history of art. Attempts have been made to show that it was this combination of ritual objects which served as the model for the later groups of pictures

behind the altar. When the saint-shrine has received the form of a many-aisled church, its front aspect does indeed present the same disposition that we find in triptychs and polyptychs — a large central compartment culminating in a pointed or rounded arch, and flanked by smaller wings also crowned with arches. The pictures of saints which are usually met with on the side-panels of an altar-piece correspond to the paintings on the façade of the miniature church, *i.e.* of the saint-shrine. The richly-ornamented coping which, especially in German altar-pieces, often frames the pictures at the top, can be explained as a reminiscence of the roof over the saint-shrine, which earlier would have had its place behind the altar. Finally the "predella"—the rectangular compartment under large pictures, which is often decorated with scenes from the legends of saints and martyrs—may, so it is argued, have developed from an altar-decoration the purpose of which had been to conceal the stands supporting the relic-case. In Viollet le Duc's reconstruction of the old altar in St. Denis, the façade of the relic-case, the Mass-table, and the square slab which masks the columns under the case, combine to form a totality which, as to its construction, corresponds exactly with a triptych on an altar; but naturally we have no right to base any theory upon a reconstruction which, even if it were correct, would only throw light on a single instance.[27]

The attempt to explain the old altar-pieces as imitations of the pictured façade of the saint-shrine must, therefore, be considered as an hypothesis which is more ingenious than convincing. Viollet le Duc's disciples were over-confident when they thought that they could show a definite model for the old picture

groups behind the altar; but perhaps they were not quite wrong in asserting a connection between the altar-pieces and some of the older reliquaries, even though these had not invariably the shape of chests or churches. If we examine the other hypotheses advanced concerning the origin of altar-decorations, we find that the pictures have always been looked upon as substitutes for the relics. According to some authors, the model for the altar-picture is to be found in a kind of wooden or bone plate, on which the saint-worshippers in the Greek Church used to fasten pieces of the holy Cross, miracle-working fragments of bone, or memorial stones from Palestine.[28] These plates were often joined by hinges, and could be closed like the covers of a book. Such "diptychs" or "triptychs" were especially collected by Crusaders, and were kept as a sort of souvenir-album which took up little room and could easily be carried when travelling. When a man returned home, it was only natural for him to place his sacred book on the altar with its relic-decked inside opened. The decoration thus received by the Mass-table is distinguishable from the great wing-altars or altar-cabinets only by its dimensions, and not by its construction. The relic-album gradually received still richer embellishment. The sides were crowned with round or pointed arches, and adorned with paintings or reliefs. Thus the great picture-compartments on a reredos or an altar-picture were foreshadowed in miniature by these open books. It was only the "predella" that was lacking.

Even for this element in the totality it has been possible to find another archetype than the screen for the supports of the relic-case, which Viollet le Duc adduced in his explanation. The "predella," it is said,

has its earliest correspondence in the "retabulum," *i.e.* a square surface of wood or metal, which is met with even on many of the altars that do not stand in front of any saint-chest. The richest examples of this object of adornment—the great "Soester" altar-piece in Berlin, "la pala d'oro" in St. Mark's, and Duccio's great altar picture in Siena—are completely covered by images in beaten gold and silver, in stone or wood-carving, or in painting. It seems probable, however, that the earliest "retabula" carried not pictures but rather relics, for the ecclesiastical councils from the ninth to the tenth century permitted nothing to be set upon the altar besides "service-books, monstrances, and *relics*." [29] The position of the "retabulum" must have fitted it peculiarly to receive on its surface small fragments of bone, which, when fastened on to the vertical surface, were visible throughout the church and made no encroachment upon the altar-table. If one imagines a "Klappaltärchen"—so the above-mentioned diptychs and triptychs were named in Germany, when they were opened on the Mass-table—placed above a "retabulum" of this kind, one sees a group of reliquaries, the arrangement of which corresponds on a small scale to that of the typical groups of pictures, and may in some cases be considered as having served as a model for them.

There are, however, authors who say that the so-called altar-cabinets and altar-pieces were developed neither from the pictorially-decorated gables of the saint-shrines, nor from the small books and shelves containing relics, but from an original saint-cabinet. But when, in accordance with such a conception, they have attempted to determine the contents of this cabinet, they have not been able to suggest that these were anything but relics.[30] The "predella," again, has in the

same way been explained as a rudiment of a complete box containing some sacred bones. In ancient documents information has indeed been found showing clearly that such relic-boxes were set up on the altar. Thus even this hypothesis is based on the supposition that during an earlier phase the paintings and sculptures had their antecedents in relics.[81]

Although investigators have not yet succeeded in putting forward any generally recognised explanation of the origin of the altar-piece, it is possible to deduce from the different theories some common statements which do correspond with the principles established in this and the previous chapters. The worship of saint-pictures attaches itself to the worship of saint-relics, and the pictures, by reason of the magical world-philosophy, are thought to possess an influence similar to that of the miracle-working bones. The representations of saints which fill the walls and doors of wing-altars or the compartments of great polyptychs point back to a period when those saints were represented, not only by pictures, but also by fragments of their bones in relic-carrying altar-pieces. Again, the very arrangement of groups of pictures at the altar preserves the memory of different relic-cases and relic-shelves erected behind or above the Mass-table. It would, of course, be too much to say that pious people would not have thought of adorning the holiest place in the church with pictures and sculptures, without having had before them some patterns from earlier models. But as we know that stands, shelves, and cabinets for miracle-working bones had been placed in the vicinity of the altar, and in a number of cases had been decorated with pictures; and as, on the other hand, we find in the supporting or enclosing function of these reliquaries an

explanation of the peculiar disposition of altar-pieces, we can hardly be considered too venturesome if we connect the two types with each other. For the purposes of this work it is not necessary to decide how far any particular one—and in that case which one—of the different ways of exhibiting relics deserves to be considered as the model for the old altar-pictures. It is sufficient that we can in any case assert that even the most conspicuous of the objects of decoration in the church, the great group of pictures at the altar, has received its outer form as a loan or an inheritance from the pictorially decorated receptacles of the wonder-working bones of saints. The remains of the dead, which constitute the precious contents of the hidden grave of the Mass-table, have occupied a prominent place in the decoration of the altar walls. If, therefore, the great altar-pieces cannot be regarded as actual shrines, yet they have, as cabinets or shelves, supported or enclosed sacred contents similar to those which were fitted in under the sacrament table. This fact affords an idea of the importance of the objects for which Catholic art erected and embellished the first, though not the most important, of her holy shrines.

CHAPTER V

THE MASS

Je crois en la toute-présence
A la messe de Jésus-Christ ;
Je crois à la toute-puissance
Du sang que pour nous il offrit,
Et qu'il offre au seul Juge encore
Par ce mystère que j'adore,
Qui fait qu'un homme vain, menteur,
Pourvu qu'il porte le vrai signe
Qui le consacre entre tous digne,
Puisse créer le Créateur.

PAUL VERLAINE, *Bonheur XVI.*

IN all that has been said in the previous chapters in regard to the arrangement and embellishment of the altar-place, no mention has been made of the ceremony, the purpose of which the altar is primarily intended to serve. What is essential and original in the Catholic ritual has been passed over in favour of a cult which only during the course of its development associated itself with divine worship. The Mass-table has been looked at exclusively as a receptacle for relics ; and in the case of the other liturgical objects, only those peculiarities have been noticed which spring from their function of enclosing or supporting the bones of saints. Such a procedure has been necessary in order to make the principles of the form-development appear with full clearness ; but, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the distinction, if persevered in longer than is absolutely

necessary, may easily lead to a wrong interpretation of the concrete works of art. In so far as we have to explain the shaping of the type, we must attach weight to the altar's property of enclosing relics; but when on the other hand we have to give an account of the altar's function in religious ceremonial, then the altar must be treated not as a saint's grave but as a Mass-table. These two principles appear to be so simple and clear that one ought easily to be able to avoid confusing them, but none the less there are particular cases in which doubt may rise as to which of the two views ought to be adopted.

One experiences such a doubt, for instance, when one sees the golden crowns and wreaths which in some of the old "ciboria" have been hung up above the altar.[1] There is no question that the princes who offered these costly ornaments to the Church desired thereby to express their reverence for the altar-place. But what was it in the altar that they chiefly desired to honour? According to the old Christian conception, the wreath is the distinctive emblem of the martyrs. They who have fought the "good fight" of faith with the sacrifice of their lives are looked upon as "God's athletes," who after death will receive their reward in the same decoration as crowned the victors in worldly games.[2] It is easiest then, so it would seem, to explain the wreaths as a kind of homage to the name-saints of the Church or of the altar, *i.e.* to the martyrs whose relics rest under the Mass-table; but there are some authors who have been unwilling to avail themselves of this interpretation. Thus Barbier de Montault considers that crowns were suspended over the altar to express the thought of Christ's royal dignity.[3] Rohault de Fleury supposes indeed that this custom had its origin in the desire to

honour martyrs; but he imagines the original purpose of the decorations to have been altered in the course of time. When the West Gothic kings offered to the Church such costly "regna" as, for example, Recces-vinthus's famous crown (now preserved in the Cluny Museum), they did not, according to de Fleury, worship saints, but they presented their homage to the King of kings, whose flesh and blood rested upon the altar during Mass.[4]

It is in itself of no great importance to decide whether the French authors are right or wrong in their interpretation. The old hanging ornaments have been mentioned here only because they offer a striking example of that twofold meaning which renders difficult the treatment of all questions concerning the symbolism of the altar. We are compelled to remember continually that it is not only the martyrs who hold sway over the sacred place, but that the Mass-table is also a room for something more worthy of reverence than the relics of great witnesses to the faith.[5]

In some cases, indeed, this fact must be borne in mind even with reference to that particular part of the altar which has acquired the significance of a saint-shrine. Although it was considered necessary to enclose some relics under the table-surface, yet the possibility that such might not be everywhere procurable was recognised. In these cases people had the right to have the saint's bones replaced by "fragments of the Saviour's body," *i.e.* by pieces of a consecrated wafer.[6] Thereby the altar became literally a grave of Christ; but there is no need to suppose that its sacredness had been to any essential degree increased. Indeed, quite independently of the contents of the hidden receptacle, it must have been easy to associate in thought the room over

which the sacramental transformation was enacted, with the last resting-place of the dead God-man. In the Greek Church such a connection of ideas is clearly expressed by a picture of Christ's burial sewn to the "antimensium," *i.e.* the silk cloth which covers the front of every Mass-table, and without which the table cannot be used for its lofty purpose.[7] The Roman Church does not indeed possess anything corresponding to these pictorial representations—unless we care to cite that singular altar at Dresden, the front of which bears a relief of Christ's grave, with the three Marys in the background and a sleeping soldier in each corner.[8] But the thought itself may have been a sufficiently conscious one, even though it has not been more frequently expressed in painting or sculpture;[9] and the ritual Easter-dramas, in which the altar, or some little temporary erection on the altar, represented the grave at Jerusalem, must to some extent have had the effect of strengthening the idea that the Mass-table was something holier than a reliquary.

If the thought of the body of the Divinity thus attached itself through various intermediaries to the altar-chest, it was naturally difficult for the saint-cult to assert its aims in relation to the holy table-surface. In the last chapter it was pointed out that from the beginning of the ninth century crucifixes and reliquaries might be set up on the altar; but it was expressly stated that in placing these ornaments—the only ones permitted in the holy place—care must be taken to refrain from occupying too much space. The saint-shrine sought to win as prominent a position as possible, but it was not allowed to encroach upon the sphere of objects holier than the relics.[10] Thus in all the varying ways of arranging reliquaries behind or

above the altar, we can read the story of a struggle for precedence between two cults. The receptacle for the remains of the dead tried to push its way forward into the central and dominant position in the church, and it had even succeeded in forcing its shape upon the lower part of the altar, which was transformed into a closed chest. But if it attempted to assert its influence over the Mass-table itself, it was thrust aside and retired to a more backward, if to no less visible a position.

The official rules for the decoration of the altar do not indeed openly bear witness to the existence of any such conflict between the claims of the Mass-table and the reliquaries, but the pious legends are in this respect much more illuminating. Thus there is a little monkish anecdote from the tenth century proving that even the saints themselves might denounce the encroachments upon the sanctity of the Sacrament, of which their worshippers were guilty :—

In a church near the monastery of Cluny, so runs the story, many miracles had been performed by the bones of St. Walpurgis; but on one occasion, when these relics had been placed for some days on the altar-table itself, the miracles completely ceased. The sick who besought the saint's help waited in vain to be healed, until one of them received a revelation from St. Walpurgis. "The reason you have not recovered your health," said the saint, "is that my relics have been put on God's Altar, which ought not to be used save for the divine mysteries." After the sick man had related his vision, the relics were moved back to the place which they had formerly occupied, and in the same hour the miraculous cures began anew.[11]

No better proof can be desired of the fact that the

Saint-worship was rightly understood as a parasitic cult, which, however closely it might connect itself with the altar service, could not in any way obscure from view the significance of the Mass. Even though the relics preserved in and on and over the altar were looked upon with reverence, yet a deeper regard was given to the objects which had immediate reference to the Sacrament itself. And if—to pass over, for the present, the movable paraphernalia—it was considered necessary for every complete altar to preserve some bones of martyrs in its interior, yet in any case the receptacle for relics was not the most essential part of the Mass-table. The small travelling altars, in which the liturgical furniture was reduced to its most indispensable components, are in this respect particularly illuminating. They can indeed all be looked upon as portable relic-shrines, but they have besides, on the lid of the case, a consecrated stone which is no less important than the bones within. This stone, which was to bear the Sacrament, had been solemnly consecrated for its purpose by a bishop. Plates of the same kind were fitted also into Mass-tables in remote churches which could not receive episcopal consecration.[12]

When it was in any way possible, however, people preferred to have the whole altar-surface consecrated for its purpose on the spot it was to occupy. On such an occasion the officiating bishop performed some important ceremonies for which a definite ritual must have been devised as early as the twelfth century. The procedure at a consecration is indeed described in detail by the liturgical author Durandus de Mende, whose famous *Rationale divinorum officiorum* was composed in 1286. Durandus first relates how the altar was sprinkled with holy water, and how it was baptised

with baptismal water. When this has been done, he says, it remains for the priest to anoint the altar with oil and unguents. While doing this, he sings: "Jacob raised up a stone as a monument, and poured oil there over."[13] The first sanctuary in Bethel was thus the type for all altars, and it was desired—with that traditional adherence to Jewish models which would afford material for long historical digressions—to connect Christian ceremonies with old biblical religious customs.

That so much weight should be attached to the consecration of the altar becomes perfectly intelligible if we take into account what were the objects—far more precious than any relics—which the holy table-surface was to bear. To the pious Catholic the altar is literally a "holy and dreadful place" (Gen. xxviii. 17), at which, like Jacob at Bethel and Peniel (Gen. xxviii. 13, xxxii. 30), he can meet God face to face. At the Mass-table there daily comes to pass the great miracle through which the highest substance takes the place of the substance of earthly materials, without the latters' *modi* and *accidents*, *i.e.* their outer manifestations, being visibly transformed.[14] Where heathens and unbelievers see nothing but a piece of bread and some drops of wine, there the faithful see their God in entire and undivided presence. They are not misled by the outer covering behind which the Mighty has concealed Himself, in order to protect human senses from being blinded by His splendour;[15] they know, they say, that He can be seen by faith, and even touched and consumed.[16] Daily, through the mediation of His priest, He binds Himself to His community, and allows Himself to be appropriated by it in a fusion of beings which is illustrated by the most material, and therefore for our

senses the clearest, form of appropriation, *i.e.* through eating and drinking. Daily He offers Himself anew for His community, when He gives Himself as an atonement for the sins of mankind. A Roman Mass is indeed not only a Communion meal, but it is also, and above all, a holy action through which the work of redemption is repeated in the ritualistic celebrations, in order to serve with undiminished force, at each repetition, as a new sacrifice of atonement.

It is the rich and significant purport of this ritual that made the Mass the greatest sacrament of Catholicism. The service of the altar is the nucleus of the Church's worship, just as the altar-table is the central point of the church building. Therefore, church art ought also, it would seem, to be explicable in its character and purpose, if considered in connection with the ritual performed at the altar.

The Catholic Mass is indeed a centre within the sphere of aesthetic phenomena also. The different art-forms collect, as at a centre point, round the ritual action. The service of the altar is above all *musical*, and it exercises its chief attraction over the unbeliever as a concert at which he hears melodies composed to old liturgical *poems*; but the Mass has also a *dramatic* element, at any rate for those spectators who understand the mystic and magical significance of the movements and gestures of the celebrants. The place at which the Mass is performed has been arranged according to an *architectural* plan, in which every detail is full of significance, and it is surrounded by *sculptures* and *paintings* which often illustrate pictorially, and thus recapitulate in a new medium, the sacred history pantomimically suggested by the actions of the officiating priest. Finally, *decorative art* extends its embellishment over

the objects and implements used at the ceremony. Thus the different kinds of aesthetic production combine in a great "Gesamtkunstwerk," all the parts of which work together for a common purpose: to give increased beauty, dignity, and holiness to the great Sacrament.

The contribution of the arts of design to the religious and aesthetic effect of the Mass-ritual has been partly noticed in the foregoing and will be treated in more detail later. Opportunity will also be offered in some later chapters of touching upon the hymns sung at the altar. With regard to the musical element, the author is compelled, by reason of defective natural qualifications, once for all to refrain from interpretation. It is thus the dramatic-pantomimic representation which must, in this connection, be the object of a bird's-eye view.

It should first be premised, however, that it is only with many limitations that the words "drama" or "pantomime" can be used with reference to the actions of the priest at Mass. That which takes place at the altar, has for its aim not so much the representation of the Atonement, as the effecting of a real renewal of it. The ritual is often indeed explained as a memorial ceremony:[17] but it would be heresy to see in it nothing but an *illustration* of the Divinity's life and death. "Immolatio nostra," says Albertus Magnus in a frequently quoted passage, "non tantum est repraesentatio sed immolatio vera, id est rei immolatae oblatio per manus sacerdotum."[18] It is thus a practical—*i.e.* in this case a religious and magical—and not an aesthetic act that the priest performs. The thought of the spectators and the impressions they may receive from the celebration has exercised so little influence that the validity is recognised even of "private masses," which are celebrated without any member of the community being present; and the

theurgical operation is so devoid of visible elements that an uninitiated beholder has no conception of the succession of mystical events represented at the Mass-table. One surmises that each of the priest's actions has its significance, one understands that the singing and the recitation refer to the great events lying at the root of the Sacrament—but one does not see the drama progress in an intelligible form.[19]

Such is the effect of the Church's ceremonial on the outsider, and such it must be also on most modern Catholics who, whether priests or laymen, have—to judge from the complaints of the religious authors—completely lost the understanding of the ritual's hidden meaning.[20] But the Mass has not always been so incomprehensible to the faithful. During the time when the theological explanation of ritual was at its height, people, at any rate in clerical circles, were able to recognise the successive stages of the Redemption in the different moments of the altar-celebration. Each gesture of the priest and his assistants could be referred to something corresponding to it in the sacred history. Thus the celebration appeared as a repetition of the Saviour's life and death, which symbolically, even if not actually, was complete and intelligible.

It was during the ninth century that such a view was for the first time put forth in detail by Amalarius of Metz.[21] Later, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the symbolical interpretation was worked out more and more by those authors who treated of the Mass-ceremonies, faithfully following Amalarius's famous writings. Honorius Augustodunensis even goes so far as to use descriptions from profane drama in his explanation of altar usages. Just as those, he says, who recited tragedies in the theatre, represented to the

people by their gestures the strifes of contentious men, so our tragedian, the priest, represents Christ's strife to the Christian people in the Church.[22] And it is not merely this one dramatic battle that is to be witnessed in the Church's ritual. The Saviour's victory over the powers of evil was prefigured, according to the mediaeval conception, in the victories which God's people, led by Moses, Joshua, and David, gained over their enemies. Again, all these struggles are models for the strife mankind has to wage against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is therefore a threefold triumph that is celebrated in the Mass-ritual.[23] Those who witness the great ceremonial with proper attention ought to win from it dogmatic teaching, historical instruction, and moral exhortation. The application to the conflicts of the individual's life is indeed left to the congregation itself; but all that touches Christ and His predecessors is, so the old ritualists assert, clearly set forth in the ceremony. The priest, they say, represents at the same time the Old Testament "types" and the personality in whom the types achieved their realisation.

When, therefore, the celebrant, in full liturgical array and followed by deacons and choir-boys, steps forth from the sacristy towards the altar, he is Christ, who from the womb, *i.e.* the sacristy, appears upon earth, "like a bridegroom from his bridechamber."[24] He is also a leader of God's people, clad in ritual panoply, in order that he may carry the Ark of the Covenant through the enemy's country to the promised land.[25] When he stands before the altar with outstretched arms he represents not only the Crucified,[26] but also Moses, who, with his outspread hands, brought Israel victory over the Amalekites;[27] and similarly, according to the ritualistic view, his gestures and

movements should recall Joshua's conquests and David's victories.[28]

During the introductory portion of the Mass-ritual, which is supposed to represent the Saviour's earlier work, and which in addition to this alludes to the Old Testament prototypes, it is only in meagre and hasty indications that the events commemorated are recalled. As soon, however, as the ceremony has reached the sacrificial moment, the priest's movements, words, and gestures follow the holy action very closely. The celebrant's peculiar, and to the uninitiated meaningless, movements towards and away from the altar, his inclinations of his body and head, his kneeling, and his outstretched hands—all these movements are in liturgical literature connected with definite scenes in the history of the Passion. He mixes water with the wine in the chalice, because Christ, it is said, diluted the wine at the Communion; he washes his hands in memory of the washing of the Apostles; and he swings the censer three times over the substance of the sacrament, because Mary Magdalene three times—at the houses of Simon the Pharisee and Simon the leper, and at the grave—offered sweet-smelling salves to anoint the Saviour's body. Afterwards, when the priest walks to the middle of the altar, he illustrates the walking of Jesus from the place of the Last Supper to Gethsemane. He prays in front of the altar in a bowed and humble posture to commemorate the prayer that Jesus, bowed and perplexed, prayed on the Mount of Olives; and he sets forth the waking of the disciples when he ceases praying, turns towards the congregation and utters the invocation "Orate Fratres."[29]

The great gesture at the culminating point of the ceremony, when the priest lifts the Host and the chalice above his head, serves, in the symbolic interpretation,

to illustrate the raising of the Cross. And when at the same moment the acolyte rings his little silver bell—or as is the case in some Catholic monasteries, the bells in the bell-tower toll [80]—this sound is not only a sign that the great miracle of Transubstantiation has been accomplished, but it also forms a part of the dramatic commemoration. At the first ringing of the bells, *i.e.* at the elevation of the Host, we ought, according to the directions of a pious author, to recall the blare of the trumpets with which the Roman soldiers were wont to drown the cries of the criminals and the murmurs of the spectators at executions. When again, some moments later, the chalice is raised during a renewed ringing of bells, the sound this time represents, with its weak notes, a still mightier noise than that of the trumpets; for the tinkling of the small silver tongues corresponds, in the interpretation of some ritualists, to the great earthquake that occurred at the final moment. And the priest's voice, heard after a long silence, should recall the words: "Jesus said: It is finished, and bowed His head and gave up the ghost." [81]

It may seem as if these interpretations marked the limit of what a theological imagination could reach. Nevertheless, the search for subtle analogies was carried still further in the explanation of the conclusion of the ceremony. After the priest has recalled the Saviour's death, he proceeds, say the interpreters, to represent the descent from the Cross and the burial. During this act, if such an expression may be permitted, he is no longer the only performer. The deacons who assist in carrying away the holy vessels all play a definite part in the liturgical "drama." Their situation by the altar corresponds to the positions occupied by the disciples and the praying women, first before the Cross and later by

the grave. The first server, who removes the chalice and covers it with a cloth, represents Joseph of Arimathea, who covered the dead God's head with a cloth when he took Him down from the Cross. The acolyte who carries the paten, *i.e.* the plate for the Host, represents Nicodemus. The three signs of the Cross that are made over the chalice signify the three days that the Saviour rested in the grave.[32] Thus when the death and the burial have been commemorated, it only remains to do homage in word and gesture to the risen Saviour, and this the priest does in the prayer "Agnus Dei."

Such in its main features is the dramatisation of the Passion Story, as it is achieved by the movements of the priest and his assistants. In the Catholic Mass-ceremonial, however, as interpreted by the old ritualists, the lifeless objects on the altar, the chalice, the paten, and even the altar-cloth, possess almost as much importance as the living persons. The holy cup, for example, is not only the vessel in which the wine is transformed into a eucharistic divinity, but it also corresponds to the chamber in which the Divine Man was hidden when dead. When the priest has dipped a portion of the Host in the chalice after the consecration, it is said that he has therewith buried Christ anew;[33] and when later the paten is placed over the mouth of the chalice, the stone has therewith been rolled to the entrance of the grave. The little piece of cloth, which covers the chalice when it is lifted from the altar, represents, as has been said, the sheet in which the body was taken down from the Cross. Again, the cloth which is spread upon the altar, for the consecrated wafer or for a fragment of it to rest upon, is (as is denoted by its name "corporale"

or "sindone") the winding sheet that covered the Saviour in His grave;[34] but it can also, and especially at Christmas Masses, be regarded as the swaddling-cloth in which the new-born Babe was wrapped.[35]

Finally, the altar is, by turns, the scene of one or the other of the great events; it is a cradle, a place of execution, and a grave.[36] Its different parts correspond to parts of the circuit within which the holy story has been unfolded. Thus, by withdrawing from the right side of the altar, the priest can signify the Saviour's rejection of the ungrateful Judea, and by lingering at the centre of the altar, can recall how Jesus sojourned in the desert before He came to Galilee. Thus, also, merely by moving the Bible from right to left, he can illustrate the fact that the heathen—whose lands are represented by the left edge of the altar—received the Saviour from the Jews, who rejected the good tidings and persecuted its messengers. By using the same symbolism, he can, at the close of the ceremony, move the sacred book once more to Palestine, *i.e.* to the right side of the altar, in order to recall that the Jews also will one day obtain forgiveness for their sin.[37] The little table-surface has thus been divided, by invisible frontiers, into compartments over which the Church's accessories—books, goblets, plates, and fragments of bread—are moved to and fro, very much like the pieces on a backgammon board. But the altar is better characterised by another comparison. It is a little stage on which a drama is played, not by actors or puppets, but by symbolical objects; and the principal personality is the highest Being Himself, who, called down to the holy place by the priest's theurgical words, once more lives through His sufferings, His death and His resurrection, in the disguise of the little wafer.

It must not be forgotten, however, that it is only according to the interpretation of certain mediaeval authors that all the small details in the service of the altar are important for the symbolical commemoration. So far as the origin of the Church's ritual is concerned, these ingenious expositions prove nothing at all. We cannot imagine that the Mass-ceremonial was worked out to illustrate so detailed a programme as Amalarius, Honorius, and Durandus set forth in their writings. On the contrary the probability is that in many cases the symbolical significance was introduced into the altar-usages after the latter had received their final form. It is an often-observed fact that old cults, the history of whose development has sunk into oblivion, give rise to mythical or legendary explanations—*i.e.* that a ceremony is considered to be a commemoration of some fictitious event which it is supposed to represent dramatically. Even among primitive peoples there exist many so-called "etiological myths," which evidently have had their origin in an attempt to account for some old ritual acts, the original purpose of which was no longer known. That the Catholic authors in their commentaries on the Mass should make use of the universally prevalent method was all the more natural, as in their case there was no need to discover any new legends. They had only to search the holy story for some striking moments which could be connected with the time-honoured actions at the celebration of the Sacrament. Such a task demanded indeed a rich imagination, and good will besides; but both these qualities were found in abundance among the old symbolists. Thus they were able without difficulty to compile a running historical narrative which connects itself step by step

with all the movements and gestures of the officiating priest.

How unnatural in many points are the symbolical interpretations of the Mass will appear clearly from the following chapters. We shall see, for instance, that the little bell-signal, which follows the raising and showing of the Eucharistic Divinity, was not originally introduced into the ritual in order to commemorate the trumpet-blast at the Saviour's death. In the same way it will appear that the washing of the priest's hands is to be explained much more simply than by referring to Pilate's excuses before pronouncing judgment. It is a truly whimsical and arbitrary fancy that has been at work in the search for historical correspondences to special moments in the ceremony. Therefore the theologians have not been able to agree on the interpretation of the holy celebration. While some, following the view of the mediaeval ritualists, regard the Mass as a symbolical representation of the whole work of atonement, others hold that only the actual scenes of the Passion are illustrated at the altar. Nor do the old authors agree as to the events to which the dramatisation refers. That the priest, for instance, washes his hands before the consecration, is explained either as a commemoration of the washing of the Apostles at the first Communion, or again as a representation of Pilate's washing of his hands.

The ingenious interpretations which were thought out by certain mediaeval authors have not therefore won unqualified adherents even among the Catholic priesthood; and, as has already been said, they are, at any rate to-day, unknown to the greater part of the congregation. Further, they have not to any notable degree reacted on the Mass-ceremony itself. The movements

and gestures of the priest and his assistants, in which some were desirous of seeing a commemoration of historical events, has, in spite of all commentators, continued to retain its indefinite character. In such circumstances it will perhaps be asked why these purely theological systems of thought have been touched upon at all in an aesthetic inquiry.

It would indeed be venturesome to assert that the symbolical interpretations of the Mass exercised any *immediate* influence on aesthetic life; but the reasoning that prevails in mediaeval ritualistic literature is still of undoubted interest for both the theory and the history of art. However fantastic Amalarius and his successors may be in their theories, we can nevertheless see, in their attempt to explain the priest's action as an accurately rendered memorial of the holy story, a proof of the aspiration of faithful Catholics to dramatise their beliefs. This aspiration has in other ceremonies—for example, the dedication of churches—led to clearer and more concrete results than in the Mass-ritual itself.[38] But none the less it was a kind of ideal drama that was worked out by the pious liturgists, and their ideas were not completely devoid of correspondence with reality. A religious play was concealed in the Mass even if it did not appear there in such completeness as some would have liked to think. Only some favourable circumstances were needed for the same dramatic tendency, which led to the theoretic explanation of the Mass, to find a practical expression in a visible manifestation intelligible to everybody.

If, indeed, it was not considered expedient, or even dogmatically correct, to let the theatrical element be prominent in the daily altar-service, yet there were special occasions which offered an easy opportunity of

bringing out the latent dramatic possibilities of the Mass. The great feast-days had indeed been set apart in the Church's calendar simply to serve as memorials of definite events in the holy story. When Mass was celebrated at such a festival, the commemorative purpose naturally played a weightier part than at the ordinary altar ceremonies. The merely allusive action connected with the celebration must have appeared unsatisfactory. The symbolic commemoration was therefore completed in a more and more realistic direction. New parts, specially referring to the day's festival, were introduced into the liturgical text, and the text was divided among several persons, who carried on a dialogue or an antiphone. Sometimes the performers were distinguished by a discreet costuming which made it possible to differentiate the pious women, for example, from the angel at the grave. At Easter ceremonies there was often set up on or by one of the altars a temporary little building—the so-called "sepulcrum"—in which was hidden a cross or a consecrated wafer, *i.e.* the symbol of the Saviour or the eucharistic God Himself. Before this grave the antiphone took place between the angels and the Marys who seek the risen Saviour. But it was probably only at a later period of development that recourse was had to such a staging. Originally the holy grave appears to have been represented by the crypt, the "confessio," or the altar, *i.e.* by the same place that was the stage for the daily religious mysteries.[39] All the associations of ideas connected with the Mass-table and its apparatus were very welcome when the memory of the Resurrection was to be celebrated by a visible representation. Thus arose the famous Easter ceremonies which were performed in the French monasteries during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

From the evolutionary standpoint these liturgical plays mark an important intermediary stage between a ritual ceremony and a drama. Although they do not let us see the final result of the development, they show us the direction in which the development is taking place. We understand that the step from the church celebration to a theatrical representation would be made in its entirety as soon as the memorial ceremonies were performed before a larger public. Among laymen, a complete grasp of the import of the liturgical symbols could not be counted upon, nor could the great mass of men be expected to be satisfied with mere decorative indications. It proved necessary to emphasise the action and to strengthen its effect by exterior means. When the religious memorial festivals were removed from the church to the market-place and the street, the simple dialogue before the altar was replaced by a great "mysterium" with decorations and costumes, and with a lively dramatic action of both choir and soloists.[40]

In the present work, however, there can be no question of describing the development which the religious theatre underwent after it had broken its connection with the rites of the Church. It belongs to a different task to give an account of the mysteries and miracle-plays which—always pious in their pretext, but often very worldly in their character—were performed at the Church's festivals. It would likewise lead us too far from our subject if we treated of all the other ritual usages which, side by side with the altar ceremonies, lay at the root of the rise of the mediaeval theatre. For our present purpose it will be enough if we can show clearly that the Mass-ritual itself contains an expression of the same mental aspirations which are at work in

dramatic art. It remains, therefore, to go back to the altar-cult itself to inquire whether the attitude of priest and congregation to the holy ceremony can in any degree be put on a level with the mental attitude of the actors who perform, and the public which witnesses, a drama.

There can be only one opinion as to the impossibility of comparing the Mass-celebration to an ordinary theatrical performance. The ritual regulations do not sanction any dramatically expressive representation; but none the less pious priests may be said to play a part in their imagination when, with Honorius's or Durandus's explanations in mind, they perform the sacred acts at the altar. The state of mind in which they carry out their programme of pre-arranged movements and gestures must to some extent be allied to those aspirations which lie at the basis of dramatic art. In either case we have to do with an imaginative attempt to project oneself into a course of strange and remote events. In an actual drama this attempt is facilitated by the sensuous vision, *i.e.* by the impressions of scenery and costumes and exterior apparatus generally, which assist the imagination in its work. In the ritual ceremonial, on the other hand, the imagination builds upon a slight foundation of certain small predetermined signals, the importance of which is known only to the initiated. Still, even the priests see before them a suggestive decoration when they stand before this altar, which is surrounded with pictures of the great Passion Story. Religious music and liturgical texts lend their aid to the imagination, and the power of faith in creating illusion is greater than any aesthetic aspiration. Thus many examples may be quoted of priests who were so absorbed by the great mystery that they could not

retain their self-possession when celebrating Mass. We hear of holy men who actually tried to resign their service at the altar because they felt too weak to live through the mighty drama.[41]

A similar state of mind must be supposed to exist among the pious members of a congregation witnessing the altar ceremonies. It is indeed, as has been said, difficult to imagine that ignorant persons in the Middle Ages should have been able to grasp the whole of the long and involved story, which, in the view of the ritualists, was symbolically presented at Mass. The "anagogical" and "tropological" references must have remained incomprehensible to the majority of laymen, nor could they follow the progress of all the Old and New Testament narratives that were reflected one within another in the ceremony. But this by no means implies that the Mass even for them must have been a meaningless play. The religious literature of Catholicism, on the contrary, testifies quite indubitably that even those who were uninitiated into the profundities of ritual could receive at the altar-ceremony the impression of a mystical drama. Although the Latin text could not tell the congregation what took place at the altar, the purport of the celebration was none the less divined. The essential events in the sacred story stood out with the clearness of life, to the imagination if not to the eye. For, however difficult it may have been to grasp the meaning of the profound symbols, there was nevertheless one thing in the Mass that was not a symbol, but a reality. The Supreme Being Himself was, so the faithful believed, present at the altar, hidden behind the bread, whose substance was transformed into divine substance although its outer form remained unaltered. No special effort of thought

is needed to understand how much this belief was calculated to influence religious imagination among both learned and unlearned.

In a little material object, the white wafer, pious people saw, with the eyes of faith, the greatest and loftiest thing that their minds could grasp. He, "for whom the whole world was too narrow," showed Himself to them in a limited and tangible shape. The fact that the sensuous vision could thus embrace a small impression, sustaining the richest and widest association of ideas and serving as a meeting-point for the deepest feelings, could not fail to influence powerfully both intellectual and emotional life. While the sight rested on the material object, imagination occupied itself with the Being concealed behind. The eye saw a wafer carried in a monstrance, or lying on a paten, or hidden in a shrine; but the thought gazed upon the Supreme Being, on His throne in the monstrance, in His cradle on the paten, in His grave in the shrine. And the thought was not satisfied with resting on the sight of the Divinity; with or without the help of theological explanations, it followed the course of the divine life through all the events the memory of which the Church was celebrating. Through the unconscious play of imagination, the great drama was worked out over and over again in all the generations of believers who witnessed or performed the Mass-ceremony. Some pious outpourings in the *Lives of the Saints* and some religious poems constitute the only immediate gain derived by art from this imaginative life; but the history of aesthetic evolution has to deal not only with perfected objective products, but also with all the unsung poems and all the unconsciously artistic creations and experiences evoked among believers by the religious cult.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Nur ein Gebot gilt dir: Sei rein.

NIETZSCHE, *Sternenmoral.*

As one realises the predominating position held by the Sacrament of the Altar, one easily understands that the importance of the Mass as regards church art may be overestimated. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that some investigators have tried to derive from this sacrament the very origin of religious art-forms.

In the case of church architecture such an attempt has been made by F. Witting. In his book, *Die Anfänge der christlichen Architektur*, this author entirely rejects all the different hypotheses as to older models for the Christian basilica. In his view it is solely the needs of the cult, and especially the needs of the communion, that have created the type of the Church's buildings. The relation of the nave to the apse, he says, has been determined by the attempt to make the celebration of the Sacrament visible to the congregation, and the successive alterations in the plan of the church have all been occasioned by corresponding alterations in the Mass-ritual. In support of this theory of an "innere Genesis der Basilica," Witting has advanced many pertinent, if rather over-subtle observations as to the development of the eucharistic ceremonies;[1] but he

has not succeeded in proving that the ritual has by itself given rise to the architectural forms. The question of the development of the basilica, indeed, cannot be regarded as having been definitely answered by research; but it appears indisputable that the explanation of the design of churches must be looked for, not so much in any "inner" causes peculiar to Christendom, but rather in the influence of concrete architectural types which had served as models for the Christian house of assembly. It has already been shown that the great Sacrament did not succeed in communicating any new or peculiar form even to the Mass-table at which the ceremony was performed, but that, on the contrary, the altar itself derived its outer shape from older constructions which originally had no connection with the communion ritual. It must be recognised, therefore, that too great importance has been assigned by Witting's theory to the influence exercised by the cult on the forms of architecture.

This example from the history of architecture is cited here only in order to justify an indispensable distinction. The same judgment that holds in the case of Witting's theory can, in our opinion, be applied *a priori* to all hypotheses which derive the *outer forms* of art exclusively from the exigencies of religious dogma and ritual. In saying so, however, we do not in any way deny the cult's importance in the matter of aesthetic production. Even if we are compelled to be on our guard against over-imaginative explanations of the origin of the art-forms themselves, we run little danger of overestimating the influence of the Sacrament on the aesthetic life that expresses itself in these forms. In its import and its purpose, even if not in its outer shape, artistic production must have been influenced by the cult whose ends it served. The correctness of this argument will be confirmed when we

give an account, in the present chapter, of the embellishment of the altar implements.

The artistic manifestations attaching to the Mass-ritual all have their counterpart in a specific mental and emotional condition, which can be immediately derived from the doctrine of the Transubstantiation miracle. The idea that the Supreme Being takes His place at the Mass-table—that, to use S. Birgitta's expression, "it is God Himself who daily is sacrificed and handled at the altar under the image of the bread"[2]—lies at the root of a peculiar way of looking at things, a religious aesthetic attitude, so to speak, which is present both in the production and in the appreciation of ritual art. The determining factor in this, as generally in all religious states of mind, is an element of worship; but the worship does not express itself primarily, as is the case in the relic-cult, in a desire to approach as near as possible to the holy object in order to be benefited by its healing contact. The relation of pious men to the Mass-miracle is characterised rather by a veneration, such as is experienced before the Holy of holies, whose presence is terrible in its sublimity. The great mystery is dreaded, since it is too immense for earthly senses to be able to bear a full understanding of its whole import;[3] and it is feared that man himself, through some carelessness, may waste or defile a part of the sacrosanct Being, who is touched and handled by unworthy hands. This fear gives rise to a studied, reverent, and anxious caution in the movements and gestures of the celebrant and his assistants, and it impresses the whole of their bearing with a subdued and devout discretion, which seems to have passed into the external nature of those who have long moved in the vicinity of the altar.

The same pious veneration is recognisable in the manufacture of the objects used in the Mass-ritual. The more definitely the doctrine of God's presence in the Sacrament was formulated, the more holy did the earthly implements in the Sacrament become in the eyes of the believers. These implements ought, so it was thought, to bear witness to their lofty purpose even in their external appearance—in their materials and decoration. If the early Christian Church was in some degree indifferent to the embellishment of ritual accessories, yet it was soon found necessary to formulate definite regulations for the manufacture of altar-vessels. Thus, as early as the eighth century, priests were forbidden to use chalices made of horn. At a council at Rheims in the year 813 permission was given, as an exceptional concession to poor communities, to use a communion service made of tin; but where it was in any way possible the vessels had to be made of silver or gold.[4] The Holy of holies ought not, so it was argued, to be exposed to contact with other than pure and holy substances, and naturally this pious solicitude was not limited to the *material* of liturgical objects. Upon the formation and decoration of altar implements goldsmiths were expected to bestow the best of their skill. The manufacture of chalices and patens was the highest task offered to art industry. These holy vessels therefore represent, better than any worldly utensils, the ideals which, during different times, left their impressions on the aesthetic production. The heavy dignity of the Romanesque period, the aerial construction of the Gothic, the beauty of form of the Renaissance, the magnificence of the Baroque, and the grace of the Rococo style, are faithfully reflected in the chalices. Even in those cases where we cannot give

unqualified admiration to the forms, ornamentation, or the symbolical reliefs which are introduced—to illustrate the doctrine of the sacramental mystery—on the surfaces of the cup, or on the knob of the chalice's handle, we are compelled to appreciate the aspiration in the craftsman's work. We see that he has tried to express that mood of exultation and reverence common to religion and art, and that he has striven to the best of his power to make the chalice for the holy meal more dignified, more costly, and more beautiful than any worldly utensil.[5]

It is not enough, however, that the Holy of holies should be guarded in pure and beautiful receptacles. It is also necessary that the bread and wine, while they rest on the altar, should not be exposed to any kind of defiling proximity. The precautions observed with this end in view, and the care taken to preserve the cleanness of the Mass-table, certainly have no immediate connection with the history of art; but they none the less deserve consideration in an evolutionary aesthetic. It has often been asserted by historians of culture that the ideas of holiness—such as are met with, for instance, in the taboo regulations among savage peoples and in the old Jewish temple-laws—fostered a ritual severity which had its effect in the spheres of both hygiene and morality. In the same way, one would imagine, the aesthetic ideals of outer order and cleanliness, which were embodied in the Mass-celebration, must, through the sacrament, have become living models for church-goers. The rules for the proper carrying-out of the sacrifice and the holy meal have their importance, therefore, if not for the development of art, at any rate for the history of that idea of beauty which is in its origin so closely connected with the ideas of order and cleanliness.

In the foregoing chapters mention has been made of some of the precautions taken to isolate the Sacrament. The Mass-table's situation upon an elevated and enclosed place precludes the possibility of the holy object's being exposed to defiling contact. A similar purpose is served by the lofty "ciborium" roof, which prevents the dust from falling upon the altar. Indeed, the origin of this superstructure is not, as has already been pointed out, to be found in any solicitude for the altar-table as such. But even if the "ciborium" made its entrance into the Church as a part of the old sepulchral architecture, yet it must soon have been valued as a protection for the Sacrament; and later, perhaps on the model of the "ciborium," simpler buildings began to be erected for this special purpose. At the Synod in Munster in 1279 it was enacted that altars should be provided with baldachins, which caught all the dirt that might fall from the roof.[6] The modern Church, indeed, has not upheld these strict requirements. Nevertheless it appears from the existing rules for the furnishing of house chapels that there is still a fear of the pollution which threatens the holy place from above. In resolutions of the Ritual-Congregation for the years 1834 and 1836, it is enacted that if a man wishes to set up a Mass-table in a private house, he must not place it under a living-room or a bedroom. And the altar must in every case be covered by a "ciborium," *i.e.* it must possess a roof of its own under that of the profane room. Exceptions to this rule are permitted only in cases where the walls of the chapel extend beyond the outer walls of the building.[7]

In the care of the altar itself the same desire to shield the Sacrament from profanation is evident. The foremost duty of the church server is to see that

the most scrupulous cleanliness reigns on the holy table. Negligence in this respect must have occurred at all periods, since the rules for sacristans inculcate the demands for ritual cleanliness with such zeal;[8] but the truly pious understood quite well, without reminders, what was demanded in the matter of outer dignity for the place where God revealed Himself. When S. Guido († 1012) was sacristan at Laeken, he "zealously took care that the altar was clean and the roof free from soot, and the floor well swept and the holy vessels resplendent."[9] S. Francis, who did not disdain to go round with a broom under his arm, that he might be able to sweep churches where tidying-up had been neglected,[10] represented to his subordinates in repeated writings the duty of keeping the altar-cloths and altar-vessels spotlessly clean.[11] In this, as in so many of his aspirations, he was effectually supported by his sister in the faith, S. Clara of Assisi, for the Church linen was a detail that women were allowed to attend to. On the ground of their sex they were, indeed, forbidden to approach the altar, or to touch the chalice, the paten, and the "corporale";[12] but they had the right to make ornaments for the priest's apparel and napkins for the holy table.[13] Large numbers of such "altarparaments" were worked by Clara during her sickness, and were distributed by her among the small churches of the villages in Umbria.[14]

The piety which saw to it that the holy place was cleaner than any other place, also strove to decorate it as finely as possible. In this the ardour of the faithful went even further than the Church authorities considered suitable. The decoration of the altar ought in fact, as opposed to the magnificence of the relic shrine, to be marked by severe and dignified simplicity;[15] therefore

frequent attempts were made to establish by ecclesiastical ordinances what things might be set up on the Mass-table. During the Middle Ages, as already mentioned, only relic shrines, Bibles, crucifixes, and candlesticks could be placed near the Sacrament. Later the Church was compelled to abandon its opposition to this devout zeal for ornamentation. Thus from the fifteenth century a custom has flourished unchecked, especially in nunneries and small country churches, of laying bouquets, flower-pots, and even artificial wreaths upon the altar; but the ritualistic authors have not ceased to lament this superfluous and undignified embellishment.[16]

These attempts to limit the number of altar objects were due, perhaps, primarily to the fear that the dominant importance of the Sacrament might be lost to view owing to a too conspicuous decoration;[17] but at the same time there was probably a desire to make certain that the Eucharist should not be exposed to profanation. This purpose is at any rate obvious in the demands for the greatest possible cleanliness which were formulated with regard to the table paraphernalia permitted. The "corporale," *i.e.* the cloth on which the Host rested, might not be made of coloured materials, and the materials might not be woven of silk or wool, as these substances, being derived from animals, were too impure for so holy a use. Flax, on the contrary, was a pure growth, and a flaxen cloth was a worthy object for the purest of all things to stand on.[18] Gold and silver again, and the precious stones which decked the reliquaries, were to mediaeval ideas not only costly materials, which made the shrine a worthy cover for its sacred contents; they were also regarded as being purer than any other substances. This symbolical idea

certainly contributed to the decoration with precious stones, not only of the saint-shrine but also of the prayer-books that lay upon the altar.[19] Just as by wearing a crystal or a diamond one was guarded against the influence of the evil eye and protected from infection, so it was thought perhaps that by means of these clear, shining, and glittering objects a purification might be procured of the place where the Divinity concealed Himself behind the "accidents" of earthy materials.[20]

The great altar candles which, since the twelfth century, have regularly been set up on either side of the crucifix,[21] offer a still clearer example of the desire for the greatest possible cleanliness in church utensils. According to the old ordinances, these candles should be moulded out of wax. Only with hesitation and reluctance did the Catholic Church acquiesce in the use of tallow or stearin candles, or, in our days, of gas and electric light, at the great celebration. The resistance to new inventions has not been due merely to a clerical conservatism. From the point of view of symbolism, wax candles are considered specially suited for use at the Sacrament. They are, say some recent Catholic authors, manufactured from a pure material, not of man's making, and the creatures who provide this material, the sexless bees, have through their virginity given the wax a kind of virginal character.[22] Thus the altar candles, like all the other altar implements, appear not only to the eye, but also to the mind, as something spotless and pure.

If the Holy is threatened with profanation through all ritual objects which are not made of fine and pure materials, a much greater danger must exist that the Sacrament may be defiled by the priests who handle that "which neither the angels nor the prophets may

touch."[23] The possibility that a celebrant might perform his duty with an unworthy mind and unclean thoughts was one that often disturbed pious writers.[24] Comfort could be found, however, in the dogma which asserts that the effectiveness of the Mass is independent of the state of mind of the consecrating priest;[25] and it was recognised, on the other hand, that no decrees could prevent such a degradation of the great mystery. External cleanliness, on the contrary, could easily be guaranteed by means of liturgical instructions. Strict personal neatness was prescribed for the priests, therefore, and they were required to perform a careful toilet prior to the holy ceremony. Again, the implements used at this purification were, like all the other parts of the ritual paraphernalia, the objects of rich and beautiful embellishment.

The most peculiar of the Church's toilet requisites are the so-called *liturgical combs.* These expensive "bibelots," as met with in all the larger art-museums, are in most cases cut out of ivory. In size they are considerably larger than their purely practical purpose would require, and their handles are adorned with elaborate and often highly-finished pictures from the sacred history. The stately form and the rich embellishment appear quite uncalled for in instruments which clearly could not have been worn in the hair as ornaments, and modern Roman Church usage gives no kind of direction serving to explain the purposes for which these gorgeous things have been manufactured. But one can understand that even so trivial an article as a comb might be considered a worthy subject for religious art, when one reads in the old theological literature that before the celebration the officiating priest was combed by the temple servers "in order that

nothing unclean might fall from his person over the holy things." From the seventh to the twelfth century mass-combs appear to have been in general use throughout the Catholic Church. It even seems as if in a number of cases the comb belonged to the inventory for each separate altar. And since at the consecration of bishops their anointed and tangled hair was combed out, this toilet article became a mark of distinction for magnates of the Church. As such, the comb was placed in their graves, and was often worshipped by the pious as a relic.[26]

By an opposite development the so-called "flabella" and "maniples" have passed from marks of rank to ritual objects. Fans were a sign of distinction among oriental potentates, and were waved by slaves to keep the air cool around the thrones. The fact, however, that a church server raised and lowered a flabellum at the side of the officiating priest at the Mass—as was often the case during the Middle Ages—was not due to any imitation of old court ceremonies. It is more probable that the Christian implement took the place of the fans used at heathen altars to procure a draft for the sacrificial fire. But if the mass-fans had thus been borrowed from the heathen cult, the Christian ritualists at any rate understood how to account for their use by a purely Catholic thought. "It is necessary to fan the sides of the altar," say the mediæval authors, "that the flies may not be able to approach the holy things."[27]

The maniples, again, or the "sudaria," were small pieces of cloth, embroidered with gold, worn by the mediæval priests over their wrists at Mass. Originally, in the opinion of most writers, these objects also were not clerical but heathen insignia. The Roman emperors had a custom of distributing to specially deserving

officials a kind of napkin, "mappulae," with which the latter gave the signal at the theatre for the commencement of the games. Later, the "mappulae" were worn on public occasions as a mark of distinction, and during the Christian period the bishops were honoured by the same gifts as the worldly dignitaries. But when they appeared at the altar wearing a maniple, the old mark of rank had acquired a new significance. It now, like the combs and fans, served the purpose of ritual purity. The priest must use it, thus write the liturgical authors, to wipe his face, so that no drops of perspiration can fall upon the bread and wine.[28]

In early Christian and mediaeval ritual, not only towels were used but also *hand veils*. These small cloths were to cover the priest's fingers while he celebrated, to prevent his touching the holy objects with his naked hand.[29] But the veils had a further meaning. By covering the hands, as in other cases by covering the face, fear and reverence for the divine majesty were expressed. Thus in Christian art many pictures are to be met with of pious men offering or receiving gifts with covered hands. Abel has his hands concealed when he brings his lamb to the sacrifice;[30] so have the martyrs when they stretch forth their crowns to the Saviour;[31] and so has Simeon when, in the Temple, he lifts the holy child in his arms.[32] On the sarcophagi at Ravenna Paul receives the rolls of the law with veiled hands,[33] and on the arcosol vault in Santa Ciriaca the Israelites collect the rain of manna in the same reverential way.[34] This gesture is expressed more completely than anywhere else, however, in the famous Communion picture in the Codex Rossanensis, where a disciple with humble bearing and veiled hands approaches the Saviour to receive the bread from His hand.[35]

Whether the hands of the celebrant and communicant were covered or not, they must in any case, according to the Church's conception, before everything be clean. The ritual washing, which played so important a part in the heathen mysteries and the Jewish temple usages, attached itself quite naturally to the Mass-Sacrament.[36] The members of the congregation, before entering the church, rinsed their hands in the great cistern in the vestibule, and the requirement that people should come to the holy meal with clean fingers was so strict that even the most rigorous and most squalid of the ascetics were compelled to submit to it. Thus Palladius relates how in the Egyptian desert he met a pious woman who was versed in the whole of Christian theological literature, and who gave her opinion with authority upon all dogmatic questions. This learned lady could proudly assert that throughout her life she had never once allowed her face, her feet, or any other part of her body to be touched by water. But even she, it appeared, had washed the tips of her fingers on all the days when she had partaken of the holy meal.[37]

From the priests themselves, who break the holy bread and handle the vessels which at the earliest times might not be touched even by sub-deacons,[38] there is naturally demanded an even stricter cleanliness than from the communicants and sacristans. The extreme consequence of the ritualistic point of view would probably be that the celebrant should submit to a thorough manicure. So far, however, things did not go; but anxiety for the care of the hands is expressed, to name a single instance only, in the regulations issued concerning the use of tobacco by priests. The clerical faculty's addiction to nicotine has indeed caused many heart-searchings among ecclesiastical authorities. Snuff

soils the fingers and the dress, and has often led to the terrible impropriety of priests, out of carelessness, placing their snuff-boxes on the altar. Cigarettes, again, have this demerit, that the smoke indelibly blackens those fingers—the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand—which handle the Host at the altar. If the priests cannot renounce smoking, they ought, according to Barbier de Montault, to make use of mouthpieces which save the hands from becoming soiled.[39]

During the Middle Ages there was no cause for uneasiness about the marks that tobacco might leave on the priest's fingers; and, on the whole, the precautions of cleanliness taken did not extend so far as those of the modern author who has just been cited. In any case, however, it was clearly shown how anxious the celebrant was to avoid profaning the sacred Being by any defiling contact. The priest must wash his hands[40] immediately before the ceremony, and he washed them again before the consecration. It is thus in cleanliness that we find the origin of that moment in the Mass, which has been explained by mediaeval authors as a commemoration of the washing of Pilate's hands. For this ablution there was naturally need of a special apparatus. Some cans, so-called *aquamanilia*, which were usually wrought in fantastic forms of lions, dragons, or griffins, belonged to the altar fittings from the beginning of the fifth century,[41] and the toilet was soon completed by a basin.

In many cases the little washing basin is to be found close by the altar, but in others, perhaps from want of space, it has been set up in the sacristy. In the older churches it is usually possible to observe that the washstand, or, to use the ecclesiastical expression, the *piscina*, has been fitted into the wall after the erection of the church; but during the Gothic period it seems

that a definite place in the wall was reserved for the washstand in the plans themselves. It is further worth noting that we often find in these washstands two basins beside or opposite one another. Such an arrangement is not due, as an outsider might easily imagine, to any striving after symmetry, but once more affords an expression of the believer's solicitous regard for the sanctity of the Sacrament. The one basin was necessary, he told himself, that the priest might, before he proceeded to his great office, be able to wash his hands, which were to touch the holy Being—"Non licet impura tangere sancta manu"—but the other basin was no less necessary for the ablutions that took place after the Mass had been celebrated.

To understand why this later ablution was indispensable, we must give an account of a side of the Church's care for the Eucharist that has hitherto been ignored. However carefully the priests handle the Sacrament during the celebration itself, yet there always remained a possibility that portions of the Holy of holies might afterwards be spilt or defiled. It was in order to provide against such an eventuality that severe penalties were enacted against communicants who from carelessness let the Host fall to the ground, or expectorated it, or spilt any drops of the wine.[42] In some places this fear of spilling the Sacrament led to the communicants being made to suck up the wine through small pipes, in order that no drops of the precious substance should adhere to men's moustaches.[43] Thus if the Catholic Church had retained the distribution of the Sacrament in both its forms, it would perhaps have unconsciously provided against all the hygienic risks involved by the use of the common chalice. As is known, however, the Roman ritual was not

content with prescribing tubes, but entirely deprived the laity of the wine; and it is thought by many authors that even this refusal of the chalice, so momentous for the Church's history, had its origin in an extreme care for the "sacra species."[44] There was no security, it was said, that the communicants would receive the divine blood with sufficient earnestness. That such an anxiety troubled the minds of the pious appears by analogy from the rules for the reception of the bread and wine implanted in the minds of priests.[45] "After the celebrant has taken in the sacrifice," says Durandus, "he must not allow himself to cough or spit. Neither must he eat the Host as men do other food, but he should hold it in his mouth with discretion, modesty, and caution, using his front teeth and moistening it with his tongue, so that no crumb can fix itself in the cavities of his teeth."[46]

On similar grounds it was naturally feared that fragments of the wafer might stick to the priest's fingers after consecration. The old books of ritual prescribed, therefore, that the celebrant, after breaking the Host, should keep his thumb and forefinger closed, so that no crumbs could fall from his hand, and that later he should rub these fingers together over the chalice, so that the small particles might drop into the holy vessel.[47] Such a precaution was necessary, but there could be no certainty that it was perfectly effective. There always remained a possibility that the priest might carry parts of the Supreme Being away with him from the altar. The care for the Sacrament could not therefore cease with the close of the ceremony. In general, indeed, conscientiousness did not attain to the degree displayed by the pious Herman Joseph, who reverently preserved the clippings of his own nails and the beard

shaved from his face because during Mass these had touched the incarnate God.[48] But at any rate it was seen to that the fragments of bread and the drops of wine, which, in spite of all precautions, might remain on the hands of the celebrant, should not be exposed to profanation. Consequently, to return to our subject, it was necessary to undertake ablutions *after* the ceremony; and further, as we can now understand, it was impossible to perform these ablutions at the same basin that had been used before the Mass. It could not be allowed that even the minutest part of the Eucharist should alight in a vessel which had been used for a previous purification. Each washstand, therefore, had its definite purpose to fulfil: in the one impurity was removed, in the other that was washed off which was purer than all earthly substances. It was, of course, only over the latter basin that the chalices and patens were rinsed after Mass.[49]

It may, however, be asked how the faithful could show their reverence for those parts of the bread and wine that chanced to remain in the basin together with the water. A basin that received and held so sacred a content naturally could not be emptied in the same way as other basins. This problem of how to get rid of the washing water in a worthy fashion must, indeed, have been one of the most difficult problems mediaeval ritualists had to solve; but here, too, they managed without failing in the respect due to the Holy of holies. Thus, during the later Middle Ages, pipes were laid from the washstand, carrying the water either directly to the earth or by means of a spout into the churchyard outside. In either case, there was an assurance that not a drop of wine nor a crumb of bread arrived anywhere save on consecrated ground; and

religious imagination, which loved, in thought, to follow the holy substances as far as possible, could even find a deep and significant meaning in the fact that the pipe debouched into a graveyard. "This sacred water," says a modern Catholic writer, "that perhaps carried with it crumbs of the Host or drops of the consecrated wine—for it had washed the priest's hands after Mass, and cleansed the chalice which had received the divine blood and the cloths on which the Host had rested—this water trickled out over the bones of the dead to give life to them, in the same way that the Saviour's blood, falling from the Cross at Golgotha, according to the legend, gave life to Adam's bones buried beneath." [50]

The modern Church does not think it necessary to provide special basins for washing after Mass, but it does not by any means allow the holy remains to be thrown out upon unconsecrated ground. It gets rid of them in a manner that is certainly reverential if not altogether agreeable to our feelings. After the priest has performed the ceremony, he cleanses the chalice with wine and washes his fingers over it with a mixture of wine and water. Afterwards, he does not pour out this rinsing water, but—we are sorry to say it—he drinks it up, out of sheer respect for the holy substance, which must not be wasted.[51]

It cannot be concealed that the majority of the facts brought forward in this chapter are extremely ordinary and uninteresting. Considered by themselves alone, they cannot be referred to the sphere of religious art, but they may, none the less, be of use in interpreting and estimating that art. They teach us to understand something of the piety and reverence expressed in the religious poems, paintings, and decorations of the Middle

Ages. They render it intelligible why even the apparently most insignificant ritual implements were manufactured with an exact care, and embellished with a loving zeal, which in many cases transformed pieces of furniture into works of art. It is said that in some old French churches even the liturgical lavabos were "incensed," *i.e.* the censers were swung over the washstands to purify them and to render them homage.[52] How far this custom has been generally prevalent need not be discussed here. It is at any rate certain that the decorative embellishment—the incense of religious art, as the Church symbolists would say—has been disseminated most lavishly over articles of furniture which to a layman are banal and commonplace. In French churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries numerous examples are met with of washstands of varying forms, and of a perpetually changing rich and graceful ornamentation. It is, says Viollet le Duc, extremely seldom that one washstand takes its architecture or decoration from another. By studying these church accessories, he continues, an idea may be gained of the limitless power of invention among the Gothic architects; and merely by the aid of pictures of liturgical washstands one could compile an entire illustrated work, giving examples of an infinity of different ways of treating one and the same subject.[58]

Beginning with the Renaissance, there was a general diminution, among both priests and artists, of that respect and reverence with which men of the Middle Ages had approached the holy objects. At the same time the symbolical point of view decreased in importance. After the priests had begun to drink up the rinsing water, there was no longer any need of such

ingenious and peculiar contrivances as the Gothic washstands; but the thing itself, the liturgical washstand, is still met with in the Renaissance churches, and in Italian art the washing-table has received a form and embellishment that make it a fit subject for attention in the history of culture. It is especially the Tuscan majolica technique that was used for this half-practical, half-religious purpose. Thus the little church of San Niccolo da Tolentino at Prato possesses a gracefully composed lavabo, executed by an unknown artist of the school of della Robbia. The sacristy of Santa Maria Novella of Florence has been adorned by Giovanni della Robbia with a still more notable washstand: a little monument in marble and majolica, which represents the highest expression that could ever be desired for so prosaic an idea.[54]

By an ingenious use of the narrow space the sculptor has here succeeded in fitting his washstand into a niche, which is surrounded and covered by tiles, and which is separated from the partially panelled and frescoed walls by two pilasters and a rounded gable, these also being constructed of glazed bricks. The little edifice is just large enough for two monks to cleanse the holy implements over the sink at the same time. The practical requirements have been completely satisfied in the size and proportion of the washstand, not to mention in its material, which so effectually protects floor and walls from being affected by damp. But Giovanni della Robbia further understood that, besides its practical purpose, his washstand was to serve a religious end; therefore the pilasters and arch are surrounded by rich garlands of shining majolica, like a tabernacle hung with wreaths. Small angel-putti support the heavy ends of the pendent festoons, and in

the round archway over the cistern the Madonna and Child are enthroned. Every little surface is adorned with pictures or ornaments, and the decoration is carried out with the pious care exercised in the manufacture of a sacrificial present. Thus the liturgical washstand becomes an ideal type of its kind, worthy of being placed beside the other church objects, all of which, owing to the influence of their religious purpose, have received a nobler form and a richer embellishment than any profane furniture and implements.

The examination of the sacred utensils at the altar-table ought, unless this inquiry has entirely failed in its aim, to give a certain insight into the state of mind in which pious people approached the Sacrament, *i.e.* the piece of bread and the drops of wine in which they think they see the Supreme Good. The idea that the Divinity allows Himself to be appropriated and absorbed through eating and drinking has given rise to a pious etiquette—the word is used here in its highest and most serious meaning—which has changed the earthly meal into a ritual action and transformed the table into a sacred and revered place. Purity, in its physical sense, has been developed into a "religious kathartic," which in its refinement even anticipates some of the prophylactic precautions of modern hygiene. For the Catholic this outer purity is only a symbol of the spiritual state of mind. We can be sure that the devout communicants in the Codex Rossanensis, for example, who in white garments and with humble reverences receive the Host in their outstretched hands, sought also to make their being worthy—as the old ritualists express it—to serve as a dwelling-place for the eucharistic God. The fear of wasting or profaning the highest Substance has

lent reverence, veneration, and earnestness to all the attitudes of the body and the soul; and thus the ritual ceremony has acted as a school in respect, and served as a worthy pattern for the forms and movements, of profane life.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOST

Could he his Godhead veil with flesh and blood,
And not veil these again to be our food?
His grace in both is equal in extent,
The first affords us life, the second nourishment.

DRYDEN, *The Hind and the Panther.*

IT is time, now that the precautions for the protection of the Holy of holies have been treated of, to give an account of the ideas of the faithful about the altar miracle itself. From the Mass-implements we must pass to the things which constitute the central point of the ceremony. In doing so, it is most natural to consider especially the wafer and its transformation. In the dogmatic conception, indeed, each of the two elements has an equal importance for the Sacramental action. The Supreme Being is not less present in that which has the appearance of red wine than in that which looks like bread.[1] But the wine which is hidden in the chalice cannot make nearly so powerful an impression on the sensuous vision as that eucharistic Divinity which is handled in the sight of all at the altar. The Host, *i.e.* the consecrated wafer, is a *thing*, with its own distinct form, to which the eyes can be fastened and which can be preserved in the memory. It can be seen from a long distance when, raised over the priest's head, it shines through the church like a

fascinating little circle of white light. It is only under the covering of the wafer that the laity, on great festivals or at the last Mass, partake of the Supreme Being, and it is the bread more than the wine that to the faithful represents or rather constitutes the Sacrament. Thus if we point out, once for all, that a good part of what is said as to the reverence for the wafer may be applied to the wine and the chalice, we are entitled to limit our observation to the first of the two forms of the Divinity's revelation in the Eucharist.

So great was pious respect for the Sacrament in the Middle Ages that something holy was seen even in the earthly material that was to afford a place for the Divinity, and it was required that this material should be as clean and perfect as possible. Just as the wine could only be of the best quality and might under no pretext be replaced by a substitute,[2] so the wafer too must be better than any other bread.[3] During the twelfth century the preparation of wafers was regarded quite as a religious celebration. The ceremonies undertaken, for example, in the monastery of Cluny in the manufacture of holy bread were very extensive. The grains of corn were selected with care, were thoroughly washed, and were dried on a delicate white cloth. The monk who carried the wheat to the mill clad himself in alba and amice, that he might worthily perform the precious transport. He even washed the stones that were to grind the grain to meal. When the actual baking began, the monks prepared for their task by reciting hymns of praise, penitential psalms, and litanies. They put shoes on their feet, that they might not come into contact with the dirt on the floor. They washed their faces and hands and carefully combed their hair. Clad in Mass-shirts, they kneaded the dough and shaped the

bread during an unbroken silence. Even the fire over which the bread was baked was as clean as possible, for it was fed with dry pieces of a special kind of wood.[4]

With such a devout respect and such an anxious solicitude was the holy labour undertaken at the time when the making of wafers lay in the hands of the monks. As early as the fourteenth century, however, it became more and more common to entrust professional bakers with the sacred duty. The memory of the Church industry was preserved only by some ancient ordinances, and by the very rare baking appliances which are to be met with in museums and the store-rooms of monasteries.[5] The most interesting of these appliances are some small wafer-moulds, which were sent by S. Francis—the Host's most devout worshipper—through the brothers of his community, to all the Franciscan provinces in order "that by their use, fine and clean Mass-bread might be made."[6]

After the wafers had been made, they were reverently preserved for the occasion when they would be transformed into Hosts. When it was a question of procuring the supply needful for the communion of the laity, the theurgical operation took place as a private celebration. But even if the priest was without witnesses, he knew how solemn his action was when, by pronouncing the words of consecration, which have so powerful a meaning for all believers, he effected the great miracle. Still more holy, however, was the transformation, when the officiant in the presence of the congregation consecrated the Host, which he himself would consume. On these occasions the mystical impression was further increased by some theatrical arrangements which visualised for those present the miracle of transubstantiation.

Especially during the earlier Middle Ages there was a tendency to make the ceremony effective even to the senses of the spectators. As already mentioned, draperies were often spread between the columns of the "ciborium," which hid the altar and the priest during the actual work of consecration. Thus, when the curtains were drawn aside, the faithful could see the transformed material, without having witnessed the act itself by which the transformation had been effected.[7] Not only was the celebration performed therefore in a veritable magic cabinet; this cabinet was besides often provided with an effective theatrical machinery. Thus in the old "ciboria" were hung up not only relics and crowns, but also the shrine which guarded the Church's supply of consecrated Hosts. In some cases, the chain by which the shrine was fastened to the roof was made to run over a pulley, so that the Host-receptacle was able during the ceremony to sink down towards the altar, and to ascend again thereafter towards the vault of the "ciborium," which by reason of a spontaneous symbolisation was taken to represent the vault of heaven.[8] Such an arrangement visualised quite perfectly the thought of the Divinity Himself, who at the moment of the miracle was descending over the Mass-table; and the religiously poetic impression was further intensified by the form given to the so-called "suspensorium." For this shrine, which rose and sunk above the altar, was no ordinary box, but had the shape of a bird: a little dove wrought in gold, silver, or enamelled copper, guarding in its body the holy bread.[9]

It is not difficult to explain why the form of a dove was given to the vessel of the Host. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Ghost; and just as the Holy Ghost assisted at the incarnation by which the Saviour

clothed Himself in human flesh, so it was thought that the third person of the Trinity would now also effect the transformation of an earthly bread made by men into the Saviour's body. It is worth remarking that in the old liturgies the "Sancte Spiritus" was specially invoked in order that the miracle of the Mass might take place through His assistance.[10] Here, as in so many dogmatic ideas and artistic representations, the Holy Ghost was regarded as a mediator between heaven and earth. It was a dove which descended over the Saviour's head at His baptism, and it was in the shape of a dove that the souls of the righteous, at the moment of death, ascended to their heavenly dwellings.

After the disappearance of the "ciboria" the use of hanging and movable Host-boxes was not discontinued. The pulley over which the chain ran was fixed to a crozier which was erected immediately behind the altar, and the dove was now placed in a small cylindrical receptacle, the open front of which was furnished with movable curtains. In a number of French churches, this ingenious apparatus was still in use in the eighteenth century.[11] Again, when ancient Church customs began to be revived during the last century, Mass suspenders were in many cases introduced. Thus in some English ritualistic churches, a cylindrical box hangs above the altar,[12] and in the famous Benedictine monastery at Solesmes the dove has taken its old place among the holy vessels.[13] These, however, are only isolated survivals of an order of things long since dead, and long before the eucharistic doves had fallen out of use the holy place had ceased to be hidden by curtains. At the time when the doctrine of Transubstantiation received its final shape, *i.e.* during the thirteenth century, it was no longer thought necessary

to maintain the secrecy in which the miracle had been shrouded.

As may be seen from old pictures, the altar was indeed frequently enclosed on three sides by screens;[14] but as it was open in front, the screens could not serve to hide the miracle from the congregation. Their purpose was probably to secure a needful isolation in which the priest could perform his high office with a quiet, earnest, and collected mind.[15] From the part of the church occupied by the congregation one could, during the moment of consecration, see the celebrant's gestures and hear his words, which in themselves were not more notable than other gestures and words; but one would know that when certain words had been spoken and certain definite gestures made, the great event had been consummated, although everything remained externally the same.[16] Thus it was demanded of the pious that they should readily believe in the miracle, although it was not confirmed in any way by the testimony of the senses. The sacramental transformation was, as was repeated time after time in explanations of the Mass and in Mass-hymns, a miracle, only visible to the eye of faith:

Quod non capis, quod non vides
Animosa firmat fides
Praeter rerum ordinem;

or to quote another poem:

. . . et si sensus deficit
Ad firmandum cor sincerum sola fides sufficit.
. . . . . .
Praestat fides supplementum sensuum defectui.[17]

However, if the Mass-action had been completely denuded of all sensuous elements, it would have been too difficult a task for the imagination of the faithful to

conceive a transformation that was not indicated by a single outer sign. The curtains of the altar-place, the drawing aside of which told that the ritual had reached its culmination, might be dispensed with, and the little dove that descended from above, when the miracle was completed, might be abolished. But in any case there was needed some signal, however unobtrusive, by which the attention of the spectators might be directed to the altar at the critical moment. Such a cue is given by the ringing of the small silver bells, which the deacon sets in motion at the precise moment when the bread and wine are transformed and the eucharistic God is raised above the Mass-table in the priest's hands for his renewed sacrifice.[18] This clear sound, the pure tones of which carry throughout the greatest cathedrals, is by reason of its symbolical meaning the most significant of all the impressions that Church music can convey to a believer's mind. It prepares the congregation for a vision of lofty things, and awakes a reverence for the Host and the chalice. The community falls on its knees, while the celebrant rises to show forth the God that is present. "Standing as upright as he can, he raises the Host, with his eyes fixed on it, and reverently exhibits it for the people's worship."[19]

It has been mentioned earlier that this elevation, with the accompanying bell-ringing, was explained by the mediaeval ritualists as a dramatic commemoration of the Saviour's death on the Cross; but it was pointed out at the same time that such an interpretation, like so many of the symbolical Mass-commentaries, only arose after the ritual had received its definite form. If we wish to seek for the very origin of the ritual sound-signal, we ought, perhaps, to go back to the bells on the robe of the Jewish high-priest, which rang

when he entered the Holy of holies.[20] It would probably be a fruitless toil to try to determine at what time the Catholic Church, in accordance with this Jewish custom, first made use of bell-ringing at the Mass-ceremony, but it has at any rate been thought possible to fix the period during which this custom became general. There was, indeed, a time when it was particularly important to represent externally also the miracle in the Altar Sacrament.

In the early part of the eleventh century a French priest, Berengarius of Tours, published some blasphemous propositions—which he was afterwards compelled to recant—asserting that the bread did not undergo any actual transformation, but only symbolised the presence of God. Such a heresy forced the Church to energetic protests, and it was, say some authors, expressly to give the lie to Berengarius's doctrine that the Sacrament began to be raised above the altar, and the congregation to be summoned by bell-ringing to worship the Divinity present. At first, significantly enough, it was only the Host that was thus "elevated," but later—from the early fourteenth century—it became customary to exhibit also the chalice during the bell-ringing.[21] It was thus, so it is said, that the Mass-ceremony adopted the two successive sound-signals, in which the symbol-seeking ritualists had seen a commemorative representation of the trumpet blast of the Roman legionaries and the great earthquake at the Saviour's death. According to the later and more probable interpretation, the bell-ringing and elevation served as a weapon against the doubts of unbelievers, and as a support for the faith of the faint-hearted.

It may, however, be objected that the exhibition of a wafer which—according to the dogmas—had not

undergone the least alteration in its outer parts, could hardly strengthen any one's belief in the great miracle. Such an objection, however, overlooks the suggestive influences exercised by the ceremony on the minds of the faithful. The certainty that at a given moment a sign of God's presence would be conveyed quickened to the uttermost the expectant attention. People waited, often indeed impatiently, for the long introductory ritual to finish; they were put into a mood of reverence by the solemn silence which precedes the consecration, when the priest sinks his voice, "out of respect for those miracles that are prepared"[22]; and when finally the silence was broken by the clear tones of the bells, they were convinced that the miracle had taken place. The faithful thought they perceived that a change had actually occurred. Even if the earthly element retained its appearance, yet they knew that its essence had been transformed, and that the Supreme Being had descended over the altar. It was as if they found themselves face to face with God, who had clad Himself in the white garment of the Host.[23] Henry III. of England gave an ingenious expression to this idea, when in the presence of S. Louis he excused his disinclination to listen to long prayers. "If one has a dear friend," said he, "one prefers to see him oneself, rather than to hear others talk about him."[24] To *see* God, when He is lifted above the altar, became indeed the foremost of the aims with which men visited churches, and the viewing of the Sacrament was regarded as a special form of devotion which could in itself render valuable a man's presence at service.

When attention was concentrated on the moment of the elevation thus carefully led up to, it was inevitable that in many cases the religious imagination should

complete the impression of the senses. The pious saw even more than, according to theology, they had a right to see. It seemed to them as if the bell-ringing were not the only sign of the miracle, but as if the Supreme Being Himself revealed by some secret token that the wafer was no longer an ordinary bread. The intensified play of imagination and the religious hallucinations to which the ritual gave rise thus produced many peculiar legends in regard to the Host's relationship to its pious worshippers.

It was natural that the saints were considered, above all other men, to possess a keen faculty of recognising the hidden God in the Sacrament. The senses of those who lived in communion with the Highest naturally grasped the slightest indications of His presence. Distance did not avail to weaken those impressions, which by reason of their "psychical relation" were so much stronger than others. Just as a mother often sleeps soundly in noisy surroundings but is awakened by the least sound of her child, so the saints perceived every sign, however weak and remote, that summoned them to worship their God. When S. Francesco Borgia still lived "in the world"—as a warrior, a courtier, and a diplomat—it often happened, says a pious author, that he suddenly broke up a hunting party and turned his horse's head towards the nearest church, that he might there kneel before the Host; for over the fields and through the forests he had heard the little silver bell which told that God had descended over an altar.[25] It could also happen to the same S. Francesco to be irresistibly drawn, on entering a church, to the Holy Sacrament, although the Host and the wine were not at that moment in their usual place.[26]

Such cases of what might be called eucharistic telepathy are by no means rare in the literature of the saints.[27] The affection with which the Host was regarded by the faithful laid the foundation for a sympathetic "rapport" which has been depicted in many naïve stories. In their power of perceiving the presence of the Sacrament some saints have surpassed even S. Francesco. Pascal Baylon, who was also a Spaniard, takes the foremost place in this respect. It is said that while he was lying dead in the church, his eyes opened at the moment of consecration, in order to take a final gaze at the object of his lasting veneration; and after his sacred bones had been placed in the church, a noise and a clatter could be heard from within the relic shrine every time the Host was raised above the altar, as if the bones had knocked against the walls of the chest.[28] Less wonderful, but in any case remarkable enough, is the case of Sainte Colette, who was informed of the consummation of the Sacrament by a kind of spiritual perception, and who was thus able one day to call the Mass priest's attention to the fact that the deacon had by mistake filled the chalice with water instead of wine.[29] Again, Ursula Benincasa, S. Filippo Neri, Sant' Angela de Foligno, and Santa Margherita de Cortona could recognise a special taste in the wafer after it had been consecrated.[30]

All these narratives are, it seems, based on the idea that there was in the Host something hidden from ordinary men, but mystically revealed to the saints.[31] If they happened to be acquainted with modern psychology, believing Catholics could cite in support of their legends the examples of abnormal quickening of the senses which have been noted in the case of "subconscious" observation; and they could find a further

correspondence with the facts of psychology in the curious circumstance that, while the qualities of the Host are imperceptible to normal human senses, they are said to have been often grasped by lower creatures. In the same way that animals have sight, sound, and scent, which are receptive of impressions experienced by mankind only under exceptional conditions—such, for example, as the hypnotic sleep,—so according to Catholic belief soulless creatures could perceive religious mysteries, which it was reserved to some saints to grasp with their senses as well as with their thought.

In a number of cases it seems to have been some specially favourable circumstances that led to the animals being able to appreciate the sacredness of the Host. Thus it was due to the influence of the church *milieu*, in which the lamb belonging to the monastery of the Portiuncula at Assisi grew up, that the pious creature betook itself to the choir whenever it heard the brothers singing, and reverently fell upon its knees when the Sacrament was lifted above the altar.[32] The legends referring to the bees' devout care for the Holy of holies may be explained in a similar way. It often happened, it was said, that bee-keepers, on the advice of magicians, placed a Host in the bee-hive in order thereby to promote its increase. In these cases it was observed later that the creatures had built an altar of wax, or even a little chapel, to protect God's body.[33] The pure insects, whose wax was thought the worthiest material for the altar candles, clearly stood in some kind of sympathetic "rapport" with the Sacrament, and it was therefore not so extraordinary that they should be able to recognise the Supreme Being in the garb of the Host. A relationship of this kind cannot be assumed, however, in the case of such worldly animals as horses

and mules. It must therefore, according to Catholic opinion, have been a subconscious perception that induced William of Aquitaine's horse to bend its fore-legs and throw its rider, because Bernard of Clairvaux had taken a Host with him when he went to meet his enemy.[34]

The same conception prevails in the legend, so frequently illustrated, of S. Anthony and the mule. A heretic, the story runs, had refused to recognise the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, because he could not observe any alteration in the bread and wine after the consecration. He declared himself willing, however, to believe in the Mass-miracle if Anthony could make his mule show reverence to the Sacrament, and Anthony, on his side, undertook to produce the convincing evidence. The animal was left without food for three days, and on the fourth was led in the presence of a great crowd to S. Anthony, who kept a consecrated wafer in his hand, while a man at his side held out a basket full of oats. "But lo! the mule turned away from the proffered food, and bowing his fore-quarters knelt before the Host."[35] One can understand that the old sacred writers intended with this legend to level a reproach against men's lack of faith, by contrasting the doubt of the over-wise heretic with the animal's blind and humble worship. The mule here plays the same rôle as the ox and the ass at Bethlehem, which also knew what mankind did not understand—that the new-born Child was a God. "Cognovit bos et asinus . . . quod puer erat dominus." But, on the other hand, it is clear that this polemic poem-with-a-purpose—if there is any rational idea in the story at all—must be based upon conceptions of some qualities of the Host hidden to human sense, which were grasped by the animal much

in the same way that S. Filippo Neri could recognise a consecrated wafer by its taste.

In the Church's doctrine of the Mass-miracle, however, there is no support at all for such a conception. When Thomas Aquinas, by direction of the highest authorities, carried out his great and lastingly-binding work on the Transubstantiation, he laid special weight on the assertion that the miraculous transformation was in no way perceptible to the senses. The Eucharist could not be grasped either by sight or taste, and no increase of his power of observation could enable even the holiest man to see the Being who concealed himself behind the appearance of earthly materials. It seems as if this unequivocal, categorically-formulated theory could not easily be brought into harmony with the idea that the Host reveals by means of some outer sign the fact that it is no ordinary bread. Indeed, it cannot be denied that there is something heretical in most of the popular stories as to the relation of the saints to the Sacrament. From the aesthetic and psychological point of view, however, it is just these heterodox legends that are of quite especial interest. They prove not only how vividly the thoughts of both priests and laity were occupied with the Mass-miracle, but they also show how popular imagination—for it is in popular imagination that the legends originate—revolted against a dogma which laid too great a claim upon the force of belief and the faculty of abstraction. It seemed hard for the pious, so one is inclined to think, that they should only believe and know that God concealed Himself behind the earthly materials, but that they should never see even a glimmer of this God. Therefore little anecdotes were evolved about some specially favoured persons who descried in the Eucharist a glimpse of the divine

substance. And therefore, also, people were not content —as had been the case in the legends hitherto mentioned—to tell of saints who by a dim feeling had a presentiment of the presence of the Supreme Being. They wished, further, to believe that God Himself had on various occasions broken through His covering, to step forth from the Host in bodily shape.

The Church authorities overlooked what was incorrect in these narratives, which were so well adapted for use in controversies with doubters and heretics; but though they were tolerated, they were not allowed to influence true doctrine. Thomas Aquinas himself, who was not a man to depart from his principles, has expressly stated that revelations of this kind should be considered either as subjective visions vouchsafed to individual believers, independently of the Communion miracle, or as due to the fact that "God was pleased to alter the appearance of the Host for some definite purpose." In neither case was the miracle more wonderful or holy than the Sacrament itself. Sensuous manifestations therefore, say the dogmatists, must not be worshipped with greater devotion than the Host, the seeming bread which in reality is a God.[86]

In spite of these warnings, however, the extraordinary revelations have made a far more powerful impression upon the great public than has the daily-repeated Mass-miracle, imperceptible to the senses. The Host-miracles, as will shortly appear, have contributed more than anything else to causing the Sacrament to become the object of a special cult. These miracles thus lie directly at the root of the notable art-production which concentrates itself round the transformed wafer. Therefore it is also necessary to give a short account of the most important of those legends,

which relate how God revealed Himself in the Host in bodily shape.

The sceptical critic finds least to object to in the stories of the visions seen by pious men during the moments when they stood in the presence of the eucharistic God. We can well believe that S. Birgitta gave a veracious account of her own mental experiences, when she tells how one Whit Sunday, when God's body was raised, "she saw fire come down from heaven over the altar and saw a living man, with blazing human countenance in the bread"; or how on another occasion she saw in the priest's hand "a young man, exceedingly fair, who pronounced blessings over all those who believed and judgment over the unbelieving."[37] It is also probable that many of the newly-converted barbarians, who had been informed by the missionaries that the Sacrament was the holiest object in the Christian religion, by force of suggestion saw a child or a crucified man on the altar. S. Patrick, for example, expressly referred to the Host, when the Irish requested to *see* the God whose power and gentleness he had so eloquently described to them.[38] When we take into account primitive man's inability to distinguish between the pictures of his imagination and the impressions of reality, we can understand that excited converts often thought they beheld with their bodily eyes what, according to erudite theology, they ought to have embraced only with their thoughts.[39]

In those cases, however, where the consecrated wafer adopted human form in the presence of heathens or heretics, the cause of the miracle cannot be sought in subjective visions. Those who will not admit that the legends have simply been invented would, therefore, do best to adopt Thomas Aquinas's second explanation, *i.e.*

"that God was pleased specially to alter the appearance of the Host." It is also significant that most of these miracles took place on the very occasions when, "for some definite purpose," it was convenient to consent to a deviation from the normal course. Typical in this respect is the story of the Catholic priest who had been taken prisoner by the Saracens. The heathen warriors scoffed at his Christian religion, and finally went so far in their defiance as to promise him his freedom if he could prove the Mass-miracle. The priest called them together to a service, and when he was about to raise the Host above his head, it was no longer a wafer that he held in his hand, but a little naked child with a glory around its head and a cross in its hand. A fresco in the cathedral of Orvieto commemorates his remarkable deliverance.[40]

If such a miracle could take place in order that a single man might be freed from captivity, the anthropomorphic Mass-revelations were, of course, all the more natural when it was a case of winning adherents to the Christian faith. People who as yet knew nothing of "substance" and "accidents" were seized with veneration if they saw the new God in visible form. Thus the first successes of the Northern Missions, according to Catholic historians, depended in no small degree upon the astounding impressions received by the Swedish heathens from S. Sigfrid's altar service. One has only to read the account given by the bailiff of Olof Skötkonung to his master, after he had visited the holy men in Småland: "Then the man with the wonderful dress took the thin bread, and after mumbling something over it, he lifted it up, and it seemed to me just as if he lifted up at the same time a little lad who smiled at the old man."[41]

Such miracles happened when heathens were to be converted, and from similar stories arguments were drawn against doubters *within* the Church. Typical of these stories is the legend of the so-called Gregorian Mass. This miracle, so often illustrated in pictorial art, is described in a number of different legends which disagree in essential points. It is most convenient first to quote that form which is found in the oldest versions of the story :—

"A woman, who occasionally, following the [old] Christian custom, made an offering of [Mass-] bread to the Church, smiled one day when she heard S. Gregory" —it is Pope Gregory the Great who is referred to— "call out before the altar : 'May the body of our Lord Jesus preserve thy soul to eternal life.' At once Gregory drew away the hand with which he was about to give the Host to the woman and laid the holy bread back on the table. Then in the presence of the whole congregation he asked what she had dared to laugh at. And the woman answered, 'I smiled because you gave the name *God's body* to bread which I had myself baked with my own hands.' Then Gregory fell upon his knees and prayed to God for this woman's unbelief. And when he arose, he saw that the Host on the altar had been transformed into flesh which had the form of a finger. He showed this finger to the unbelieving woman, who immediately lost her doubts. And the saint prayed anew and the flesh took on anew the shape of bread, and Gregory communicated the woman with the bread." [42]

That the Host was transformed into a finger seems, however, according to the Catholic idea, not to have been a sufficiently wonderful miracle. In a later variation of the legend, which was often narrated in prayer-

books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there did not appear a finger in place of the wafer, but Christ Himself stepped down upon the altar surrounded by all the implements of His Passion; the pillar to which He had been bound and the rods with which He had been scourged, the lance with which He had been pierced and even the hands by which He had been struck.[43] This miracle offered a suitable motive for representation on altar-pieces and altar furniture. At the very place where, according to the legend, the revelation had occurred, carvings or pictures were made of the Saviour and of all the objects that recalled His suffering. Thus the help of art was enlisted to strengthen all doubters in their faith, by reminding them of the miracle that had once occurred by reason of a holy man's prayers.[44]

However much such a revelation at Mass may have contributed to stamp upon the minds of the faithful a conception of the miraculous element in the Sacrament, it was hardly calculated to promote the worship of the Host as such.[45] The divine form distracted attention from the bread which ought in itself to be regarded as a God. Of much greater importance for the doctrine of the Host, therefore, are the legends in which a consecrated wafer reveals some signs of life, and nevertheless, so far as the senses can observe, remains a wafer. To begin with the least remarkable, it has frequently, according to assertions of Catholics, spoken with a human voice. It is, indeed, intelligible that the pious, when they felt oppressed or troubled, might believe they heard comforting words emanating from the bread behind whose outer form the Supreme Being was concealed. The legend of the Host-miracle in San Damiano outside Assisi is the most famous example of this kind of revelation.

When, the story runs, S. Clara's convent was threatened by a robber band of Saracens, the saint sought help from the eucharistic God. Sick as she was at the time, she had herself led to the entrance, and the nuns carried to her the little shrine of silver and ivory, "in which, in the most holy way, God's most holy body was concealed." As soon as this Host receptacle had been shown to the heathen robbers, who had already won a position upon the walls, they were stricken with panic and broke up the siege. This event, the memory of which is still preserved in an old fresco above the entrance to the little convent, is not in itself more notable than many other miracles related of the Host; but what is peculiar is that Clara, before the critical moment had arrived, had already received from the Host itself a comforting promise of deliverance. When the nuns had all "assembled before their God, with tears and lamentations," the Abbess addressed the holy shrine: "'I pray Thee,' said she, 'my dear Lord, that Thou hide [preserve] Thy servants, whom I cannot preserve in this peril.' And immediately there was heard from the shrine a weak voice like a child's, saying: 'I will always hide and defend you.' And then she said: 'O my Lord, preserve also this town, if it please Thee, which maintains us for love of Thee.' And our Lord answered her: 'Heaviness and sorrow shall this town endure, and yet shall it be defended by my grace.'" [46]

If we wish to uphold to the uttermost the love of truth among the authors of old legends, we might interpret the answers of the Host as hallucinations on the part of S. Clara. Such an explanation is precluded, however, in the case of the story told of a nameless sinner in Germany. A woman, it was said, "was

unclean in her body, and openly lived an evil life. One day, as she stood in her house, God's body was carried past, and she ran out so hurriedly that she fell into a pool of mire up to the arms. In her distress she called out: 'O Lord, if Thou art a true God that art here borne in the shrine, forgive me my sins.' He answered her from the shrine in Latin, and said: 'I forgive thee thy sins.' But the woman cried out: 'O Lord, I do not understand Latin, answer me in German.' Then He answered her in German that her sins should be forgiven. And the woman reformed, and lived a clean life." [47]

If the consecrated wafer was once able to talk, it is not surprising that it was thought to possess the power of free movement which is characteristic of living creatures. We are told that, at least on one occasion, in S. Gervais in 1274, it has got out of the way of thieves who attempted to seize the Sacrament; and in Faverney it avoided being destroyed by a raging conflagration by raising itself in the air.[48] Just as it favoured its devotees with comforting words, so it also came to meet them, that it might be one with them at the Communion. S. Catherine of Siena, the Saviour's promised bride, on one occasion when she was to receive the Communion together with some Dominican nuns, had remained by the entrance to the church, in so inconspicuous a place that the priest did not even notice her presence. But at the moment when the bread was broken over the chalice, a piece of the Host went flying through the air and disappeared. With intelligible anxiety, the priest searched for the fragment of wafer before covering the chalice; and he continued the search after Mass. All his efforts were fruitless, however. Harassed by the thought that he had been guilty of wasting the Holy of

holies, he betook himself to S. Catherine, to ease his heart with that pious woman. She, however, smiled at his disquiet, and informed him that the piece of wafer had sought her out in her remote place by the church door. "You have lost nothing," she said, "but I have gained much."[49] With this miracle in mind, we should not be surprised that the Host at S. Hieronymus's last Mass is said to have flown from the paten into the saint's mouth of its own accord.[50]

The power of speech and of movement, however, do not constitute all the qualities possessed by the Host in common with living creatures. It could suffer like a man—or rather like a god-man—if it was the object of harsh treatment,[51] and it could even bleed if wounded.[52] According to mediaeval popular belief, the Jews were peculiarly liable to insult the Holy Sacrament. If, it was said, they once got a Host in their hands, they did not fail to transfix it with knives, "in the same way that they transfixed living children at their own Easter festivals." It frequently happened that Jews were killed and their shops plundered merely because some blood-stained wafers had been found near their dwellings. In a number of cases it turned out later that this Mass-bread had neither been consecrated nor stolen by Jews, but that some zealous Christian had dipped a wafer (he would not, of course, have dared to pollute a *real* Host) in blood, and exposed it in a prominent place, in order to incite to a holy war against the hated Israelites.[53] In other cases, however, the provocators were never disclosed, and thus legends of Hosts that bled under the knives of Jews were accepted among the recognised miracles of the Sacrament.[54] But the Church authorities never seem to have attached great weight to these popular traditions, which indeed

cannot easily be harmonised with Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Quite different has been the lot of the legend according to which the Host bled in order to convince a doubter of the truth of the Catholic Mass doctrine. This miracle, which took place in 1263 at the little village of Bolsena, near Orvieto in Umbria, is indeed the most famous and, in respect of its consequences, the most important of all the eucharistic miracles. A young priest, the story goes, was much oppressed by his inability to believe in Transubstantiation. His doubt left him no peace, even while he was himself celebrating Mass. But one day, as an express contradiction of all his silent objections, it happened that a stream of blood poured out from the Host and ran over the altar-cloth. The priest, who could not fail to be convinced by such a token, betook himself to the Pope to relate the miracle, the authenticity of which immediately received pontifical confirmation; and a step was taken which was hardly permissible according to strict Aquinian principles. The altar-cloth, spotted with drops of blood, was regarded as a relic and became the object of a special worship, such as had not up to this time been dedicated either to the Host or to the consecrated wine. The precious cloth was carried in procession from the church at Bolsena, which was not thought worthy to house so great a treasure, to the cathedral at Orvieto.[55] It was there enclosed in a relic-shrine, and to-day we may still see its little temple, the walls of which were, at the end of the fourteenth century, decorated by Maëstro Ugolino da Siena with quaint little pictures of the different chapters of the legend. For the faithful this sanctuary is, without doubt, a far more notable sight than the great chapel

opposite, in which art historians and tourists interested in worldly aesthetics admire Fra Angelico's prophets and patriarchs, and Luca Signorelli's great frescoes on the Last Judgment.

As is well known, the miracle in Bolsena furnished the subject for one of the great wall-paintings in the Heliodorus chamber at the Vatican. In Raphael's treatment of the motive—characterised by a powerful realism and by a masterly decorative disposition which, for us moderns, renders the fresco the most imposing of all his works—the religious purpose has entirely given place to purely artistic ends. The legend has merely served as a pretext for a powerful composition, which, if we fix our attention on its essential qualities, can in no way be regarded as a product of pious and specifically Church art.

In other spheres of art, however, the sign by which the priest at Bolsena lost his doubt has been of direct importance to aesthetic development. For the new miracle contributed a final and conclusive reason for the Host becoming the centre of a special ritual celebration, the great *festival of Corpus Christi*, at which all the resources of art were made use of to glorify the religious mysteries to a far greater extent than at the altar service proper. How it came to pass that some external, and apparently quite fortuitous circumstances, so worked together that this festival was ordained throughout the Catholic world as a universal Church ceremony is a long and involved story, which will be related in detail in the next chapter. Before doing so, however, we must shortly summarise the ideas concerning the Host that have been adduced here.

Pious imagination, it seems, has associated around the holy bread a whole system of superstitions which in

themselves are no less irrational than the belief in the power of relics. Dogmatic theology had asserted the majesty of the eucharistic God, and had inculcated the doctrine that the actual form of the Supreme Being in the sacramental incarnation was imperceptible to the senses; but popular devotion would not be satisfied with so metaphysical an idea. Notwithstanding the dogmas, it repeated the legends of how the Host had proved by different manifestations that it was a living God. This conception, which theology was powerless to uproot, could not be without its effect upon the relation of the faithful to the Sacrament. If the Mass-transformation, as explained in dogmatic literature, was above all a "mysterium terribile," an incomprehensible and awful miracle, it became, as interpreted by the legends, a mystery both joyful and rich in promise. God came nearer to mankind if one could hear words of encouragement from the Host, and see a little child or a suffering fellow-creature in it. Reverence for the Holy of holies continued undiminished, but with reverence was mingled tenderness and affection, and the holy bread became in imagination a Being with which the pious could enter into a purely personal relationship.

The Host favoured its worshippers with revelations and comforted them in their need. It did not, indeed, allow itself to be used to the same extent as the relics for miraculous cures;[56] but it gave to the faithful at Communion a promise of eternal life, and it strengthened the pious by its mere presence. It turned aside dangers from holy places, and protected the Church more powerfully than any palladium.[57] Men did not approach the Host as commonly as the relics with prayers for help; but it was the Host which, in its character of a present God,

received all the homage and worship of the congregation. Devotion and love gathered round the little white object in which the Supreme Being confined Himself in visible form.

This circumstance gives rise to a cult of the Sacrament which, in spite of many essential differences, corresponds in its outer forms with the relic cult. As the worship of the martyrs' remains led to the holy bones being enclosed in costly receptacles, exhibited in churches and carried in processions, so the worship of God's body led to the Host being preserved—with a far greater care than was accorded to relics—in special Host-hiders, to its being exhibited in Host-showers, and to its being carried in procession to meet its worshippers at the festival of Christ's body. Thus we come to the shrines which Catholic art has made and decorated for the holiest of all conceivable contents.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MONSTRANCE

Vous nous parlez des dieux ! des dieux, des dieux encore,
Chaque autel en porte un, qu'un saint délire adore,
Holocauste éternel que tout lieu semble offrir.
L'homme et les éléments, pleins de ce seul mystère,
N'ont eu qu'une pensée, une œuvre sur la terre :
Confesser cet être et mourir.

LAMARTINE, *Harmonies.*

THE year 1263, as has been mentioned earlier, marked a turning-point in the history of the Host-cult. The miracle, through which the altar-cloth at Bolsena was spotted with the blood of the eucharistic God, gave rise to the institution of a universal Church festival for the glorification of the altar-sacrament The idea of such a festival was indeed not unfamiliar to the age, for both dogmas and legends had led to the Host having become more and more the object of a formal worship; but the idea would not have been allowed to realise itself—at any rate so quickly—in a Church institution unless the miracle which took place in the neighbourhood of the Catholic capital had increased and quickened reverence for the Sacrament. And the Corpus Christi ceremony would not have gained its place in the Roman calendar so easily unless, for some decades previously, efforts had been made to secure for the consecrated wafer the honour of a special festival.

In order to give a complete account of the rise of the great Corpus Christi festival, therefore, it is necessary to go back a step beyond the time of the miracle at Bolsena. Thus, at the very beginning of the thirteenth century, a proposal for a ceremony which should be exclusively devoted to the praise of the Host had been made by Juliana de Mont Cornillon, a young Augustine nun from the district of Lüttich. Her idea, however, was not realised outside her own neighbourhood, and she received no recognition for her project, which later, after its accomplishment by others, was to have such important results. The Church has at any rate shown its gratitude to her memory, for she is now worshipped as a saint, and the day of her death is commemorated—in accordance with an Edict of Pio Nono in 1869—throughout the Catholic world.

In the chapter on S. Juliana in the Calendar of the Saints (the 5th of April), we can follow her life from childhood to the grave. From this biography, better than from any dogmatic investigation, we learn to understand the feelings and thoughts with which the pious in mediaeval times venerated the great Sacrament.

Juliana was, we are told, a saint and an ascetic from her childhood. She early became an orphan, and was educated by the nuns and father confessors in the cloister of Mont Cornillon. All her teachers praised her as an obedient and humble pupil. Only one fault was found in her, and this had its basis in her too great religious zeal, for she undertook, without her Superior's permission, to attempt to imitate the great saints in all their penances. By intelligent guidance, however, the exalted girl was gradually wooed from her tendency to excessive mortification. Her interest was then directed from fasting to the great feasts.

She lived entirely absorbed in the circle of festivals which extends through the Church year, and which, in unvarying repetition, wakes in the minds of the faithful a rich hopefulness at Advent, a heavy despair on Maunday Thursday and on Good Friday, a vernal gladness at Easter, and an ecstatic fervour at the summer festival of Whitsuntide. The great mysteries of Christianity—the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—were visualised and quickened in her mind by all the different ceremonies of these commemorative days. It seemed to Juliana that by the liturgical celebrations she was year by year reminded anew of the great gifts the Church received from its Lord—yet not of all of them. Half-unconsciously, so one is apt to imagine, she must have experienced a feeling that there was something lacking in the chain of festivals; and this feeling, the ecclesiastical authors say, expressed itself to her for the first time in a vision, the import of which long remained unintelligible to her.

When one day, at the age of fifteen, she was sunk in prayer, she suddenly saw in front of her the circle of the full moon. It shone with a clear light, but over its gleaming surface there stretched a sharply-outlined dark spot. As in duty bound, Juliana communicated her vision to the Abbess, who was unable, however, to decide on the meaning of the revelation. Only after two years did the young nun, by means of a new vision, obtain an explanation of the sign. She now dreamed one night that the round moon signified the circle of Church festivals, and that the dark spot denoted that the circle was not complete, and that the "corona" could not yet shine with full and perfect brightness. For the Church had omitted to celebrate the memory of the

most precious of the gifts received by her: the gift of God's presence in the consecrated wafer.

Such a sign, with all the summons and reproach which it implied, was not easy for a young girl to accept. What could she, an insignificant nun of seventeen years, living in a remote cloister, do to remedy an omission in the festivals of the Holy Roman Church? She felt so oppressed and frightened by the mission which God had entrusted to her, His weak servant, that this time she did not dare to mention the revelation even to her immediate superiors. She concealed it in her memory while she grew up and gradually rose in rank in the nunnery. At the age of thirty-three she was chosen abbess of Mont Cornillon, but not even this dignity gave her courage to publish her secret. Not till five years later, twenty years after she had received her vision, did she open her heart to another nun. The two women united their prayers—for this was the only step which for the present they dared to take—asking God that the omitted festival might be instituted by the Church as soon as possible. They strengthened one another in their hopes, and the secret did not seem so fearful now that there were two to share it; and as usually happens in such cases, it was not long before a third partook of the confidence.

This new confidante, however, who was likewise an Augustine nun, doubted Juliana's vision. It seemed to her that the daily Mass contained a sufficient homage to the eucharistic God. But she was soon to be cured of her little faith. A year later she, too, had a revelation: she saw how all the saints advanced towards God's throne to speak in favour of Juliana's festival, and she heard a voice saying that "it should be as the saints desired." From that day no more doubt reigned

among the pious friends. They now ventured even to confide in the Church authorities in the district, of whom it is not necessary to remember the names of more than one — him who then wore the name of Jacques Pantaléon.

The authorities consulted agreed that there was nothing in Catholic doctrine to forbid the institution of a festival such as Juliana had dreamt of. The Abbess received full permission to arrange a ceremonial for the new solemnity, but when the question arose of writing the necessary hymns and composing melodies to them, all shrank back from the lofty task. No one dared to aspire to the credit of singing of so holy a mystery. Only after much persuasion did a young priest consent to undertake the work, but he did so on the express condition that Juliana, on her side, should help him with her prayers from the moment he took up his pen. When the ceremonial was finished, neither he nor she assumed any merit for themselves, for it had originated, as the sacred writers expressed it, "while the virgin prayed, and the monk wrote, and God wonderfully helped them both"—"Christi virgine orante, juvene fratre componente, Deo autem mirabiliter auxiliante."

Thus, as early as 1230, there had been compiled and celebrated at Lüttich a ritual which in its aim and dogmatic import fully corresponded to the ceremony which was to become the stateliest and aesthetically the most important in the whole of the liturgy of the Catholic Church. However, before this festival of the Host, from having been merely a local institution, received a place among the Church's great and universal celebrations, the pious Juliana herself had to suffer much shame and persecution. The people, like the priest-

hood, took up a critical attitude towards the new ceremony. "It was treated," we are told in one chronicle, "like an old woman's fancy, men discussed it over their cups, and out in the streets and market places, and scoffed at those who attached any weight to the dreams of a foolish nun. Juliana's person and reputation were torn to rags in town and country, so that she finally became a bye-word in every one's mouth."

It is not necessary to give a detailed account of the later fortunes of the pious nun. It is sufficient to mention that she was expelled from her cloister, and had long to conceal herself among some faithful adherents; that she was, indeed, reinstated later in her dignities, but was driven out anew, and that she died as a fugitive without having seen her festival recognised, *i.e.* without the moon surface of her vision having had its spot effaced. Thus it seemed for a time as if Juliana's mission had failed to achieve any result;[1] but then there happened, far away from Mont Cornillon, the event that was to arouse men's zeal for the worship of the Host: the great miracle at Bolsena. With this miracle was associated another event which, at least to believing Catholics, seemed as though designed. For the Pope, Urban IV., who was then reigning at Rome and who received from the priest at Bolsena the account of the miracle, was none other than the same Jacques Pantaléon, to whom Juliana had thirty years before confided her visions. The occurrence in the Umbrian town reminded him of the promises he had made to the Belgian abbess. So in the year 1264 he issued a Bull, to the effect that the Corpus Christi festival should be celebrated annually on the Thursday after Trinity as a universal Church feast-day throughout the Catholic world.

In Juliana's fatherland there was long retained—right up to the seventeenth century—that ceremonial which had come into existence through the combination of the nun's prayer and the monk's writing and God's own help. In Rome, on the contrary, there was a desire to establish a greater and more stately office, and the authorship was entrusted to the man who had shortly before given its definitive form to the Communion doctrine itself, namely, Thomas Aquinas.

The result of the great scholastic's work was a ceremonial, which not only—if we can believe the Catholic authorities—surpasses from a dogmatic and liturgical point of view all other festival-offices, but also possesses a unique interest in literary history. For between the prayers and Bible extracts recited at the Corpus Christi ceremony a number of new hymns were introduced, written for the occasion; and in the task of formulating poetically the doctrine which in his dogmatic writings he had developed systematically, Thomas Aquinas proved not only a philosopher but also a poet. His manner of expression, indeed, is not rich, and he does not, like so many others of the mediaeval poets, adorn his text with precious similes and ingenious epithets; but his diction is instead powerfully concentrated, and the spare sentences teem with meaning. If judged merely as attempts in the expression of theoretical ideas, his poems would compel the recognition of a purely aesthetic merit by reason of their clear and firm form, which makes their abstract content intelligible and alive. To this must be added, however, the artistic verse structure, with rich rhymes, both within the verses and at the last syllables, which with their regular resonance impress the weightiest conceptions

upon our minds; and, finally, the rhythm in which the hymns proceed—a rhythm that is stately and majestic in the great sequence *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*, and contagiously joyful in the famous hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium.* Church song has seldom taken so lofty a flight as in this stern scholastic's glorification of the consecrated wafer.

If Thomas Aquinas's hymns were imposing, yet poetry was not the dominating element in the ritual of the Corpus Christi festival. It was before all by a theatrical representation that it was attempted to make the Host's feast-day striking. Just as on the saints' days their relics were carried in procession, so also it was thought needful on the day of the eucharistic God to exhibit the holy object out in the streets and squares. The procession of the Host, therefore, became from the beginning of the fourteenth century the most conspicuous feature in the Corpus Christi festival.[2] It was desired not only to demonstrate to unbelievers and doubters the greatest sacrament of the Catholic Church, but simultaneously to convince them of the Church's power and wealth. No splendour was too costly for the decoration of the route along which the holy bread was carried, accompanied by all its worshippers and greeted by the prostrations of the faithful. It was, it has been said, a real triumphal procession which the Church had prepared for the eucharistic God. And just as at worldly triumphs, so too at the festival of the Host men desired to recall all the victories which the Church's Lord had won. *Ecclesia militans* celebrated its exploits in pantomimic and dramatic representations. A beginning was made by arranging groups of costumed characters who walked in the procession,

representing some persons drawn from Biblical Church history. Later it became the custom to let these groups perform a dramatic action, and gradually there grew out of the interludes at the Host processions complete dramas, which were performed on special platforms at the halting-places of the festival train. For the English and Spanish theatres these sacramental plays, as is known, possessed an importance which has been fully appreciated by all literary historians. In these cases, however, the theatre freed itself from its dependence upon the Church, and it would be impossible to represent the famous York "mysteries" or Lope de Vega's "Autos sacramentales" as any kind of immediate expressions of Host worship. Our own concern is limited to considering those elements in the Corpus Christi ceremony which have a direct reference to the venerable object itself, *i.e.* to the transformed bread, which is exhibited and borne round.

It is natural that during the procession the Host should be the object of the same reverence as within the church. This reverence, again, gave rise to some special ceremonial implements, which could not be omitted at any great Corpus Christi festival.

When the Host rested on the altar, it was protected from defilement by the roof of the "ciborium" or by the "baldachin" that rose over the Mass-table. During its procession through the streets it was to be no more exposed than when in its own house. Therefore a movable roof was carried above it. These "baldachins," which recalled the canopies of earthly princes, naturally contributed to the triumphal impression of the eucharistic God's victorious progress. Although they may have appeared earlier at funerals and Church processions, they first came into general

use as ritual implements through the Corpus Christi ceremonial.[3]

Other objects owing their origin to this ceremony are the little *resting-altars* that were set up at fixed points on the route of the procession. They were, as the name denotes, designed to support the Host during the moments when the procession halted. As no sacrifice was performed at these tables, they might be made out of simple material, *e.g.* out of wood and stretched cloth. But since the Supreme Being would in any case rest for a while on the "reposorium"—so the provisional altar was named—there was a tendency to give it as dignified an appearance as possible. In its form it imitates the Church's Mass-table. In its fittings, according at any rate to modern ecclesiastical writings, all profane glitter must be avoided;[4] but since the decoration of these objects was often left to the pious zeal of individual members of the congregation, it is probable that the demands of a severe taste were not always observed. The "reposorium" was fitted out as a dwelling-place for an honoured guest. It was decorated with men's finest possessions, and people were proud that these things should be in close proximity to the eucharistic God. If the ornamentation did not always satisfy the demands of decorative style, at any rate it witnessed to a touching intention among the faithful. Pious taste is by no means always aesthetic, and Flaubert has rightly characterised the devotion of simple souls in the story of the old servant who placed her stuffed parrot on the resting-table of the Host, that thus she might honour God with her dearest possession.[5]

The "baldachins" and "reposoria," however costly and richly decorated they may have been, took no

notable place in artistic production. A canopy does not offer a suitable surface for decorative treatment; a provisional altar, again, is altogether too transitory a thing to stimulate a craftsman's ambition. Much more important aesthetically is the object which serves to enclose and immediately to support the Host itself.

It is easy to understand that the priests could not hold the little wafer in the hand if they wished it to be seen by the crowds. Again, if it was carried, as was usual at one time, in its tabernacle, *i.e.* in a Host-shrine, the worshippers merely saw the covering and not the thing itself. An implement, therefore, was needed to enclose the Host without concealing it. Such an implement existed in the relic-showers that have earlier been described in detail. The saint-monstrance could easily be transformed so as to carry a Host instead of the holy bone fragments. Thus arose, through the martyr cult once more having lent its implements to the eucharistic cult, that ritual object which occupies so predominant a place in the Catholic service: the Monstrance.

The Host-monstrance seems originally to have been employed only at the Corpus Christi processions, but it rapidly obtained a wider use. In proportion as the Host-cult won a higher importance in the faith, a greater weight began to be attached to the showing of the Sacrament. The literature of edification impressed upon the faithful the idea that at Mass the Supreme Being was met face to face;[6] and superstition associated important advantages with such a meeting. One could not, so it was said, be exposed to any misfortune if one began the day by waiting upon God at the Mass-table.[7]

All this testifies that the worship of the Host took on the same character as the worship of relics. The

result of this was naturally that men were not content with the hasty glimpses of the holy object which could be caught at the elevation. If the laity had had its way, "le bon Dieu" would, without doubt, have been perpetually exposed in the church without any covering. The priests, however, could not permit the impression of the Holy of holies to be weakened by a too frequent repetition. Therefore in everyday life the God, *i.e.* the consecrated wafer, was enclosed in a tabernacle, but the pious were satisfied by the institution of an "expositio sanctissimi" upon an altar in the church on special festivals.[8] On these occasions the same implements were naturally made use of as at the Corpus Christi processions. It is from a monstrance that the Host radiates its divinity over the church. Just as the eucharistic God was often spoken of by Roman Catholic authors as a king, so the monstrance was compared to a throne. When it stands erect on the altar, it is a "throne of grace," on which the transformed bread receives the worship of the faithful.

In their form, as has been pointed out, the oldest monstrances correspond with the relic-showers.[9] Their most important portion consists of a cylindrical or polygonal crystal glass which encloses the Host. The latter rests inside the glass on a semicircular gold piece, the so-called *lunula*, which is also frequently named Melchisedek, in memory of the first priest who carried on his hand a sacrifice of bread and wine.[10] The glass again is surrounded by a richly-ornamented chasing in fine metals. During the Gothic period this chasing usually represented a simplified cross-section of a church. Later the forms became more capricious and fantastic. In some cases, great works of sculpture were produced in enamelled gold and silver, representing, for instance,

John the Baptist carrying on his arm a lamb, which in its turn supports a little transparent Host-shrine. The Renaissance introduced circular monstrances, and the Baroque period gave rise to the type which is still prevalent in the Church : a great flaming sun, enclosing the Host in its centre. This type, as the interpreters explain, commemorated the Psalmist's words, "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum." [11] The Gothic forms are unquestionably the most graceful and noble, but it is easy to understand that the modern monstrance, by reason of symbolical associations, appeals more powerfully to the minds of believers.

It is not necessary to describe in detail any individual Host-monstrances. However interesting these implements may be for the history of artistic craftsmanship, yet they teach us nothing new about religious and aesthetic ideas. There is only one of these Host-receptacles to which we need to direct our attention, namely, that which is pictured in Raphael's "Disputa." In itself, indeed, this monstrance is not particularly notable, for it has the ordinary Renaissance shape of a circular gold frame resting upon a candelabra-like support; but the manner in which the "Supreme Good" has been introduced into the composition is in more than one respect suggestive.[12]

The painting, as is well known, is horizontally divided into two halves. In the upper half, which represents heaven, the centre point is occupied by the Saviour, with God the Father above Him and below Him the dove of the Holy Ghost, descending towards earth in a cloud. By the side of the Trinity we see, first and foremost, Mary and John the Baptist, and after them, in a long circle, the prophets and saints. This circle has its complement, in the lower half of

the composition, in the great figures of the Christian Church—a truly motley assembly in which even personal friends of Raphael have received a place. The centre point, round which all these shapes are grouped and which thus corresponds to the heavenly circle's centre point, the Saviour Himself, is an altar crowned by the shining monstrance rising above the heads of the wise men. As the Host is exhibited here, it literally constitutes, in the expression of the Catholic dogmatists, "a hyphen between Heaven and earth." Again, the dove, descending beneath the Saviour's feet towards the altar, illustrates the same idea of the work of the Holy Ghost in effecting the sacramental incarnation, which in mediaeval ritual was expressed by the movable shrine in the shape of a dove. Finally, the great men who all turn towards the monstrance—not, as is usually supposed from a misunderstanding of the title of the fresco, in a dispute, but rather in unanimous worship and invocation [13]—imply by their gestures and expressions that the eucharistic miracle is the highest and greatest of all the miracles on which they have had to test their power of thought. Thus in his composition Raphael has concentrated the thought which lay at the basis of the whole Catholic Mass doctrine: that the Host was the supreme point between Heaven and earth, the riddle of all wisdom and the centre of all faith, and the thing which, above all others, was worthy to be worshipped, hymned, and glorified.

CHAPTER IX

THE TABERNACLE

. . . . .
Vierge portant, sans rompure encourir,
Le sacrement qu'on célèbre à la messe.
En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

FRANÇOIS VILLON,
Ballade faite à la requeste de sa mère.

IN the foregoing chapter we have been concerned with Church implements, which by a free use of terms might be called Host-shrines. The monstrance in which the eucharistic God is placed when borne in procession or exposed for worship on the altar, is indeed a covering for holy contents; yet it is not a dwelling-place, but only an occasional harbourage for the Supreme Good. In religious importance, therefore, it cannot be compared with the God-houses, in the word's most literal meaning, which were erected and fitted up to preserve the Church's supply of consecrated wafers. These so-called "ciboria" or *tabernacles* are in their form, their embellishment, and their symbolical import the most characteristic of all the products of the Church's artistic handiwork.

Even during the first centuries the custom had been adopted of consecrating a greater number of wafers than was needed for one holy meal, but there are no indisputable proofs that this precious reserve was kept in the church itself. The priests took the Sacrament home with them, and even the laity were allowed to take away

consecrated Hosts, that they might be able to make a last communion if they were surprised by enemies.[1] The holy objects were wrapped in cloths which were hung round the neck, or were placed in small boxes which were carried about the person, in the same way that an amulet or a reliquary is carried.[2] During the times when persecution raged most fiercely, this kind of portative Host-shrine was an indispensable ritual implement. The more the Church was compelled to conceal its existence, the more zealously did people cling to that which was above all other things a sign of the community's union with the Supreme Being. Care for the Host could even lead to martyrdom, if we may believe the legend of Tharsicius, the young acolyte, who gave his life to save the eucharistic God.[3] If it was not thought advisable to give the Sacrament a public and isolated place, it was instead hidden, as carefully as one hides one's dearest possession. In this respect the customs of pious Catholics have been the same during all persecutions. Thus we might cite, as analogous to the old Host-receptacles, the small boxes carried on the person in which the Holy of holies was preserved by the imprisoned priests during the Commune in Paris.[4] Most famous of all these secret "ciboria," however, is the little silver box which S. François de Sales kept hidden under his mantle when he walked through the streets of Thonon and with prearranged signs drew his congregation to follow him secretly, so that, unknown to the Calvinists, they might worship the holy Host.[5]

It is, however, natural that, when once they felt secure from persecution, men wished to prepare for the Sacrament as worthy a place as possible. After Constantine had secured recognition for Christianity—if not as far back as the earlier periods of transient peace[6]—

it was considered most proper that "God's body" should be preserved in "God's house." A depôt was instituted in the church for the holy reserve, from which the priests could provide themselves with Hosts if they were unexpectedly called to a sick person and had not time specially to consecrate new bread. Thus the Catholic temple became what—in contrast to the Protestant—it still is: a room in which God is not only spiritually present on special occasions, but in which He dwells continually in a sensuous and visible form.

The evidence as to the manner in which the holy reserve was kept in the churches during the earliest period is both incomplete and contradictory. It seems most probable that the Hosts, like the relics, were originally enclosed in boxes which had served some worldly or pagan purposes. After the Christians had begun to employ their own craftsmen, special receptacles in imitation of old models were probably made for the Sacrament, *i.e.* small holy "hiders" which, to a still higher degree than the heathen shrines, gave reason for the name of "cista mystica."[7] It is by no means easy, however, to decide if all the "pyxes" of stone, metal, or ivory now shown in museums under the name of eucharistic implements really had any connection with the Mass-ceremony.[8] What we ought to be able to assume, however, is, that the Host-vessel was placed near the altar. Where this was crowned by a "ciborium" roof, the shrine for the holy reserve was hung over the Mass-table as a "suspensorium." Here the Holy of holies was visible throughout the church, and at the same time inaccessible to any blasphemous approach.[9] The Sacrament swung between Heaven, *i.e.* the vault of the "ciborium" roof, and earth, which "was not worthy to be touched by so precious a gift." When, as was men-

tioned in the last chapter but one, the "suspensorium" received the shape of a eucharistic dove, the form and position of the Host-shrine harmonised completely with the Mass-symbolism.

When the hanging shrines were not used, another worthy and protected place was naturally sought for the eucharistic God. In a number of churches the Hosts were kept in movable boxes, which were set up on the Mass-table itself, and which—perhaps because they had formerly been hung from the "ciborium" roof—continued as *partes pro toto* to be called "ciboria."[10] In other churches the vessel for the holy bread was placed in sacrament-houses fixed to the ground, and as a rule built at the side of the altar. This arrangement, which in Germany and Italy gave rise to important works of art, was common during the later Middle Ages; but it was abandoned during the sixteenth century, after special ecclesiastical assemblies had decided that the shrine for the holy reserve should be kept behind the altar, within the great reredos,[11] which during the high and late Renaissance took on more monumental forms than ever before. That piece of sacred furniture which had originally borne remnants of saints thus became, before all, a Host-preserver. The old strife for pre-eminence between the relic-cult and the Mass-cult was closed, and the altar-sacrament had won its decisive victory when it occupied the central place on the wall which had been reserved for the bones or pictures of saints. Like a hidden, and yet to pious observation always discernible, eye, the Host shines out from the altar monument, and the whole church decoration appears to the faithful as a frame around the Holy of holies, which rests in the heart of the building. The sacrament-house has disappeared, but instead the temple

itself has become a single eucharistic tabernacle, which is made and embellished to "lodge worthily" the God who is present in the Host.[12]

Where the holy reserve, in accordance with the older custom, did not occupy this dominating position, care was always taken that the pious might be able to find it without difficulty. A lamp burns day and night before God's dwelling,[13] and the little sanctuary is often further distinguished by a *conopé*, *i.e.* a kind of curtain or baldaquin, which is an infallible sign of the presence of the Supreme. "Wherever thou seest this curtain," exclaims Father Rio in his book on the furnishing of churches, "bow thy knee and worship. Magister adest et vocat te."[14] Nor do the faithful omit to signify by bowing and kneeling their reverence for the temple's "praecellentissimus ac nobilissimus omnium locus."[15] In the Catholic religion, therefore, one can literally speak of a "devotion before the Tabernacle." How profound is the reverence for the covering of the Holy of holies may be seen from the example of the pious monk Suso, who never failed to choose a circuitous way past the sacrament-house when he betook himself through the church to or from his cell. "He who has a dear friend," such were the words in which he accounted for his habit, "who dwells in his street, will gladly go a little further," "um eines lieblichen Erkosens wegen." When the same Suso, in his scrupulous piety, reproaches himself for having failed in respect towards the Sacrament, he especially repents that he so often stood thoughtless before the place where the Host was guarded, and he compares his own lack of devotion with the overflowing ecstasy of David, who "joyfully and with all his might danced before the Ark of the

Covenant, which nevertheless contained only earthly bread and earthly objects." [16] This comparison is worthy of notice as a proof of the close connection of ideas between the Tabernacle and the Old Testament Ark,[17] and from this connection we may conclude that the Host-preserver also, like the lofty sanctuary of the Covenant, was regarded as in itself a holy object.

It is not necessary, however, to refer to any literary proofs that the dwelling-place of the Sacrament occupies a predominant place in religious and aesthetic emotional life. This circumstance appears clearly, no less in the way in which the tabernacle has been fitted and embellished than from the symbolical ideas attached to it. For all the types of tabernacle, however manifold and different they may be, possess certain qualities in common, giving them an aesthetic interest. It need hardly be said that careful endeavours have been made to keep the shrine for God's body as pure as possible. According to ecclesiastical edicts its inner walls must be completely covered with white silk, and kept in as good and as clean a condition as possible.[18] Its outer sides are adorned with pious zeal, and it is evident that the craftsmen sought in their work to do the utmost that devotion and skill combined could achieve. Thus there are certain of these small temples which afford the observer more matter for admiration than the great houses around them, *i.e.* the churches in which they are erected.

In a number of cases the shrine has even assumed not only the character, but also the dimensions of an independent building. Adam Krafft's famous sacrament-house, nearly 20 metres in height, in the Church of S. Lorenz in Nuremberg, could actually not have been placed in the church, unless the top of the slender building had curved itself along the roof of the church.

Such a tabernacle is indeed paradoxical in its abnormal development in the vertical direction. But the thin, slender tower—which, rocket-like, first shoots up along the vault column, to bend later in a lovely curve just where it reaches its culmination—is in any case so gracious in its peculiarity, so sumptuously trimmed with elegant lace-work in stone carving, and so richly decorated with small life-like and entertaining pictures from all the principal subjects of sacred history, that in our surprised and fascinated contemplation we forget every criticism.

If we wish to see harmonious, proportional, and less extravagant solutions of the problem of how to enclose worthily the Holy of holies, we may look at any of the Florentine wall tabernacles.[19] All the *naïveté* and grace that make the Tuscan sculptors of the second rank—Desiderio da Settignano, Benedetto da Majano, or Luca della Robbia—so matchless in their art have been combined in these small cabinets of marble or majolica; and the disposition of the liturgical furniture is as ingenious as it is decoratively effective. We see before us, let into the wall, a Renaissance portal, which through the illusion of perspective impresses one as leading into a deeply-hidden Holy of holies. The arch above the door is usually occupied by the dove of the Holy Spirit, which thus stretches its wings over the inner room. By the side of the door stand watching angels in small niches. They often carry a scroll with inscriptions from Thomas Aquinas's Communion cycle, "Ecce panis angelorum." The entire portal is framed by infant angels or angels' heads, and beyond by luxuriantly rich garlands, such as only artists of della Robbia's school could carve. All this is so joyful, childlike and gracious, that the decoration, if analysed,

must be admitted to agree but little with the lofty seriousness of the Christian religion, and especially of the Holy Sacrament.

Considered as works of art, these Renaissance tabernacles represent the most noteworthy of all types of the sacred cupboard, but this type cannot convey complete illustration of the symbolism of the Host-shrine. In order to know the dogmatic and poetic ideas which attach to the aesthetic products, we must turn from Italian and German Renaissance sculptures to some older and often much less artistic, yet symbolically more important tabernacles; and we are compelled to pass by the purely artistic element in the embellishment, in order to fix our attention upon the meaning of the forms and decoration. The first thing we notice in examining the form of mediaeval tabernacles is that they are usually lofty and slender. Therefore the sacrament-house in S. Lorenz is far more typical of this kind of liturgical furniture than are the cabinets of Italian Renaissance. The prominence given to the vertical direction, which made Adam Krafft's creation so marvellous, is to a greater or lesser extent the characteristic of the majority of Host-preservers. Whether the tabernacle is boastfully costly, like the high silver temple which Juan de Arfe wrought for the Cathedral of Seville and adorned with stately Renaissance colonnades,[20] or unpretentious, like the small wooden wafer-houses in certain French and Northern country churches,[21] men have most frequently sought to give to the abode of the Eucharist the shape of a tower. This type of tower is as significant for the free-standing Host-preservers as was the form of a church in the case of relic-shrines. Among the many names by which the room for the holy reserve is denoted in the

older liturgical literature we find more often than any other *turris*, *i.e.* tower.[22]

It cannot have been due to accident that precisely this form was considered specially suitable for tabernacles. We must suppose that some important religious ideas were associated with the conception of a tower. To understand this association of ideas, we must acquaint ourselves with the tower's symbolism.

A tower is an inaccessible building, and this type has therefore been used by preference in the erection of ancient treasuries. When—as is the case, for example, in the German churches on the Rhine—the Host had been placed above men's heads in a strong tower tabernacle,[23] the Sacrament had been given a dwelling-place in which it was secure from insult or robbery—an eventuality that had always to be reckoned with, since the Holy of holies was often stolen, to be misused for magical purposes.[24] When the tabernacles were small and movable, however, this practical point of view cannot have prevailed, but it is probable instead that the tower form was thought to convey a symbolical warning of the shrine's precious contents. It was easy to recall how the tower, by reason of its impregnability, had been used as a simile in ancient poetry when it was desired to express the idea of invincible might. The Psalter and the Book of Proverbs offer many examples of the use of this comparison, which naturally were not unknown to the mediaeval ritualists and craftsmen. Again, the doctrine of the Host, as has been shown step by step, was for the Catholic Church both the most precious and the most highly valued of all religious ideas, as well as the most strongly fortified, *i.e.* the most energetically defended, of all dogmas. It was natural, therefore, that the eucharistic God should be most

efficiently protected in a shrine having the form of a tower. And it was by a consistent expression of the same idea that this shrine was in many cases surrounded by small towers and a battlemented wall, *i.e.* by architectural motives which further heightened the impression of a strong, well-defended, and impregnable fortress. By the same association of ideas the eucharistic dove was sometimes surrounded by small pinnacles and miniature towers.[25]

Among the movable tower tabernacles, often carved in ivory, which had their place on the altar itself, there are many, however, which are not provided with pinnacles or walls. If we examine these Host-preservers more closely, we find that the idea of fortification has not been expressed in them at all. They cannot be regarded as fortified precious shrines, whose inaccessibility it was desirable above all things to illustrate through the decorative motive. The tower type must therefore, at any rate in these cases, have another function than that of conveying the impression of power and security, *i.e.* there must be attached to the idea of a tower some symbolical thoughts other than those which refer to the dignity of the Sacrament and the invincibility of the Mass doctrine. What these thoughts are can easily be found if we examine the place occupied by the tower in older Christian art.

A tower-like building is one of the objects most often met with in old Christian reliefs, ivory carvings, wall-paintings, and miniatures. Especially in sepulchral art-works is the narrow and lofty house common. If we know the subjects of the compositions, we understand that the building is designed to represent a grave. In all the numberless reliefs and paintings portraying the raising of Lazarus, the dead man steps out from

a small house having the form of a tower.[26] In the significantly rarer early Christian and mediaeval representations of the visit of the Marys to the tomb, the tomb, if not a tower, is at any rate a lofty and detached building.[27] It is not impossible that just such a type of grave was used in the East at the time of Jesus, but it is not necessary to form a definite opinion as to this archaeological problem. The important thing is that during the first Christian centuries and a large part of the Middle Ages, people seemed to have imagined that the Saviour was placed in an upright grave which was either hewn out of a rock or was a detached tower —the latter, we may say in parenthesis, being a form of grave still to be met with here and there during quite late periods of religious painting.[28]

The grave being thus regarded as a tower, it is easy to suppose that the small tower-shaped Host-preservers were considered as a kind of grave. This supposition is strengthened as soon as we turn to ancient liturgical literature. According to the Catholic idea, the "ciboria" enclose not bread but the body of the God-man; and as long as this body is hidden in the Host-shrine, it is preserved there as in a grave. "Corpus vero Domini ideo defertur in turribus, quia monumentum Domini in similitudinem turris fuit scissum in petra" ("But the Lord's body was laid in a tower, because His grave was hewn out of the rock in the likeness of a tower"), we read in the old Gallic liturgy.[29] In the ceremonial by which "ciboria" are consecrated for their office, they are spoken of as "corporis Christi nova sepulcra," that is, as new graves for Christ's body.[30] Rohault de Fleury has even found a sentence of Bede's, in which the venerable author states that the "ciborium" ought to be worshipped with still greater respect than would be

given to the actual grave of Christ. "For," he says, "the new grave preserves the Saviour's risen and living body, while the old one only enclosed His corpse."[81]

That artists too had a clear idea that the Host-preserver was a kind of grave is quite evident from the decoration with which these shrines were adorned. The burial and resurrection of Christ are frequent motives in the reliefs introduced on the walls of "ciboria,"[82] and the same motives are continually found in the carvings on tabernacles attached to walls. Italian Renaissance art offers numberless examples of this.[83] It may be mentioned also, at least as a curious coincidence, that the abode of the Host is not only adorned with pictures of the holy grave, but is often erected on the same plan as the great monuments to princes and holy men which occupy the walls in Renaissance churches. Just as the altar itself, with its superstructure, leads one's thought back to the old hero graves, so too the architecture of the tabernacle affords a striking resemblance to the architecture of the house of the dead. At the end of our research, we stand before the same building which formed the starting-point for the first chapter in this part of our work.

The symbolism of the tabernacle, however, cannot be completely explained by those ideas which are associated with the conception of a grave. It was indeed natural that the shrine which preserves the Host, *i.e.* the Saviour's body, should be associated with the holy grave, in which God's body had for a time rested after the completion of the Atonement; but it was more in consonance with religious thought to connect the Host-preserver with another holy room which had been an abode of the incarnate God. For if,

on the one hand, the Saviour had been hidden "after His sacrificial death" in a grave, and if the grave had thus become a precious shrine, yet, on the other hand, before entering the world in human form, He had been hidden a still longer time in His Virgin Mother's womb. Mary is therefore the foremost of all coverings of holy contents. She is praised by poets and preachers as a temple of God, and her beauty and virtues are glorified with precious epithets, which are the poetical counterparts of the costly objects with which decorative art embellished the reliquaries and Host-preservers. Therefore Durandus expresses a logical conclusion of pious reasoning when he deliberately says in his *Rationale*: "And mark well that the room in which the consecrated Hosts are enclosed betokens the glorious Virgin's body." [84]

This line of thought has not left many traces in plastic art, but it is probable that the faithful were reminded of the Virgin by the mere outer shape of the tabernacle. The tower which had lent its form to the Host-preserver was, as will appear from the following chapters, one of the standing attributes of the Madonna, and Mary's person had been associated in numberless hymns with the conception of a tower. In many cases, also, deliberate attempts have been made by means of pictures to emphasise the connection between the Sacrament and the Madonna. Both on fixed and on detached tabernacles the Annunciation has often been portrayed, and the greeting words of the announcing angel engraved.[85] There are also some small Host-shrines shaped as statuettes of the Mother of God.[86] When the custom of preserving the Host in the altar-pieces themselves had commenced, the thought could with still greater ease pass over from the eucharistic

God to the incarnation of the Highest in human form, and to the human being in whom He had His abode. The paintings above the Mass-table, indeed, represented not only scenes from the life of the saints whose relics were guarded at or on the altar and events from the great Passion story, which was repeated in the renewed sacrifice of the Sacrament, but they also portrayed the great and holy tabernacle: Mary, the Virgin Mother.

When followed to its logical conclusion, however, the line of thought by which the Host was identified with the God-man led to some further associations of ideas which were important for the whole of religious and aesthetic life. If Mary and the Tabernacle had a common characteristic in that they both enclosed the Deity, the same characteristic could be accorded also to those who in the Communion partook of the body of the Highest. The priest who daily celebrates Mass and thereby appropriates the Sacrament in both its forms—the bread and the wine—is regarded in consequence of this as a dwelling-place of God. He is a sacred shrine, which even externally—we may think of the Catholic Mass robes—is quite as expensively decorated and adorned as any tabernacle or reliquary. Quite literally he appears to Catholic ideas as a Host-preserver. "Special hiders of God's body," Birgitta calls the priests; and she asserts, with an exaggeration which is found also in S. Bernard's writings, "that their office is higher than the angels" since they touch with their hands and mouth Him whom the angels would fear to handle.[87] In Thomas Aquinas's Mass doctrine this thought is expressed still more unmistakably. The wine, he says, must not be given to laymen, since God's blood must be preserved in specially costly vessels; but the priest is a vessel of solid gold, adorned with the precious

stones of the virtuous.[38] "How great and honourable is the priests' calling," cries the author of *De imitatione Christi*, "since with holy words they consecrate the God of glory, and bless Him with their lips, hold Him in their hands, receive Him in their own mouths, and offer Him to others. How clean should the hands be, how clean the mouth, how holy the body, and how spotless the heart of the priest to whom the Lord of purity so often enters."[39] All the ideas connected with the implements of the Mass are, it seems, applied also to the celebrant of the Mass. We have only to read how S. Bernard specifies the duties and rights of priests. "To the Levites it is said, purify yourselves, ye who bear the Lord's vessels (Isaiah lii. 11), but to you it should be said, purify yourselves, ye who *are* the Lord's vessels. In you is buried the honourable and glorified body that once was buried lifeless at Jerusalem." "Woe to thee if thou hast not laid Him in a new or at any rate renewed grave, *i.e.* in a body that is pure from sin, or if thou hast sinned, purified through repentance and penance. Woe to thee if thou hast not buried Him in a clean shroud, *i.e.* in a conscience that has been purified and freed from every spot." The rock grave in which none had been buried save the Highest, and the clean wrappings with which Joseph of Arimathea covered the dead Saviour, serve as similes for the celebrant's undefiled virtue.[40]

For one who, like S. Bernard, wrote for priests, it was natural to insist primarily on the *demands* for purity. Those authors, on the other hand, who addressed the laity, laid most stress upon the holiness of the celebrants and the reverence due to them by reason of their calling. By no fault or offence could the priests entirely forfeit the rank they acquired from their con-

nection with God.[41] S. Francis of Assisi has expressed more sincerely and more intimately than any one else the veneration of the faithful for those who daily bear the Supreme Being in their bodies. "If," he says in his testament, "I possessed all the wisdom of Solomon and met some poor minor priests out in the country side, I should not like to preach without their permission. Them, and all other priests, I will fear, love, and honour as my lords, and I will not look upon their sin, for I see God's Son in them, and they are my lords. And I do so because here on earth I see nothing of the Divine Son of God save His most holy flesh and blood, which the priests partake of, and which they alone distribute to others." The brothers of the order, according to Francis's instructions, should even be prepared to kiss the hoofs of the horse ridden by a priest.[42] When we read these pious outpourings we understand how, according to Catholics, the celebrant by the eating and drinking partook of a holiness that made him literally a being worthy of worship.

The same ideas must naturally be applied, if in a lesser degree, to the communicating laymen. Every man who partakes at Mass of God's body is transformed thereby into a covering of the Supreme Being. He does not become holy, but he acquires a high dignity, and is weighted by a heavy responsibility. The pious, who prepare themselves for Mass, seek therefore with all their power to make themselves fit, in the religious expression, to offer their sinful bodies as a dwelling-place for God. Accordingly, just as in the arrangement of the Tabernacle, the Holy Place was shielded from defilement with anxious and solicitous reverence and was adorned with devout zeal, so in their own persons men desired to avoid all uncleanness and to deck themselves

as well as possible in order to receive God in a worthy tabernacle.[48] In this aim, it was said, they imitated the Madonna, who humbly, reverently, and piously had offered her bosom to the Lord of worlds. In the chief devotional book of the Middle Ages, *De imitatione Christi*, "the disciple," preparing himself for Mass, expressly compares himself to the Mother of God: "Lord God, my Creator and Redeemer, with such great affection, reverence, praise, and honour, with such great thankfulness, worthiness, and love, with such good faith, hope, and purity, I desire to receive Thee this day, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received and desired Thee when, after the angel had announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation, humbly and piously she answered: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me as Thou hast said.'"[44] The glorious Virgin who housed the Supreme in the pure and lovely temple of her being was thus the pattern for all believing communicants.

To the mystic who wrote the *Imitation of Christ* the external dignity was only a symbol for the inner state of mind. The pious ought to receive the Incarnate God into their bodies adorned with virtues and cleansed from sin. The idea that the Highest could be enclosed in a human being led thus to a striving which was not merely aesthetic, but which also, if followed out in all its results, might have succeeded in winning a far-reaching ethical significance. It is not, indeed, probable that the moral applications of the Mass doctrine were known to the great majority of believers, but in the ritualistic authors many proofs can be found that the symbolism of the tabernacle was understood in a purely mental sense. Durandus, for example, speaks of the Host-shrine as corresponding to man's memory, which

carefully harbours in its repository all God's gifts to the race.[45]

The conception of the Sacred Shrine which lay at the root of the symbolism of the altar, the reliquaries, and the tabernacles, has thus been more and more extended. It embraces, as appeared in the first chapters of this research, many peculiar architectural and decorative objects, which by reason of certain dogmas were considered sacred by those confessing a certain form of religion. But it includes also another covering which is precious by reason of the contents it may enclose. This last sanctuary is a sacred shrine which, independently of religious assumptions, is worthy of being reverenced by every one: the body of man and the soul of man, the noblest subject for all art and the finest groundwork of any adornment.

The symbolism associated with these coverings and their contents will be the subject of the latter half of this work. There, in accordance with the nature of the task, architecture and the decorative arts will no longer be touched upon. It is in the representations of painting and sculpture, and above all of poetry, that we must seek Catholicism's ideal type of physical and moral beauty, *i.e.* the human Virgin, who by reason of her grace and her virtues was found worthy to be the Mother of God.

II

CHAPTER X

THE DOGMA OF MARY

Wherfore in laude, as I can best and may,
Of thee and of the white lily flour,
Which that thee bare, and is a maide alway,
To tell a storie I wol do my labour ;
Not that I may encresen hire honour,
For she hireselven is honour and rote
Of bountee, next hire son, and soules bote.

CHAUCER, *The Prioresse's Tale.*

IN the first part of this work an account has been given of a number of symbolical ideas derived from the doctrine of the consecrated wafer's identity with the Godhead. It has been shown that Catholic ritual and ritual art meet around that mystery through which the Highest reveals Himself to men, and allows Himself to be appropriated by them in the shape of earthly bread. It has also been shown that the same doctrine of the Sacramental transformation, which gave their sanctity to the altar-place and to the altar implements and an awful and mighty meaning to the altar ceremonies, has also led to the dwelling-place of the Host being associated in the minds of the pious with the Mother of God, *i.e.* with the tabernacle of God's human body. Through this association our inquiry was immediately transferred to another idea, which was as important for religious art and religious and aesthetic life as was the Mass doctrine. The

Sacramental incarnation in the altar-miracle has its correspondence in the birth, at once natural and supernatural, of the Deity as a man. This mystery is for Catholic art, Catholic poetry, and Catholic devotion as important fundamentally as the great Mass mystery.

Just as the table and instruments of the Mass are the holiest of all earthly objects, so Mary, *i.e.* the instrument through which the divine birth was made possible, is the holiest of all earthly beings. The symbolical ideas attached to the great Sacrament frequently have their counterparts, even in the minutest details, in the symbols of the Incarnation; and the state of mind with which the pious regard the Mother of God is in many respects similar to the devotion towards the altar-miracle. The cult of the Madonna is based, like that of the Host, on the idea that the Supreme Being entered into relationship with earthly elements. The earthly elements, the bread and wine or the human flesh, become by reason of this relationship the objects of an adoring veneration, and the veneration in each case expresses itself in an anxious care for the inviolability of what is holy.

Our account of the Mass doctrine has shown that the Sacrament gave rise to a ritual science, which made the altar-service a model of earnest and careful cleanliness. The altar is a table, and the Communion is a meal; but the table and its implements are ideal types of all household goods, and the meal consists in an eating and drinking from which it is sought to abstract all gross elements. The appropriation of the eucharistic God becomes an act in which nutrition is idealised and in which the biological phenomenon achieves—to use the expression of the pious—its sanctification. Through a similar aesthetic and religious

idealisation, the second fundamental process of life has been raised to a higher plane in the cult of the Madonna. Mary is a mother, who conceives and gives birth to and suckles a child; but the child is a God at the same time as it is a man, and according to the religious idea its holiness must not be profaned by too close a contact with what is earthly. Just as in the handling of the eucharistic God in Catholic ritual the utmost care was taken to avoid any wasting or defilement of the Holy of holies, so in Catholic dogmatics pious labour and subtle arguments have striven to isolate the idea of God's life from the ideas of the low and unclean elements which are thought to be inherent in natural generation. Thus the Madonna becomes the model for all mothers, an ideal type which serves as a pattern for earthly women, but which cannot be in any way confused with them. The principle of the inviolability of what is holy is carried so far that it ends in a paradox. That Mary should be a real mother to her Divine Child was demanded by pious devotion; but the worship of the Holy of holies required at the same time that she, as the Mother and fostress of God, should be spotlessly pure. Therefore, the Catholic process of thought logically led to the doctrine of a woman in whom motherhood was freed from all earthly and material elements. The processes of life are sanctified in her person, but that person stands so high as to be quite independent of human conditions. For the Madonna is indeed a mother, but she is at the same time a virgin.

It is in the union of these opposites that we must seek the fundamental trait in the Madonna-type of the Roman Church. Such as this type meets us in poetry and painting, it is a product of an aesthetic activity,

but even in this case the artistic production is based upon dogmatic development. Just as we cannot fully understand the decoration of the Church without knowing the theology of the Mass, so we cannot rightly comprehend the poems and pictures of the Madonna if we have not made ourselves acquainted with the doctrine of the Holy Virgin's personality. To a considerable extent, therefore, the statements we are about to make in the following chapters are based upon a study of the purely theological literature of the Middle Ages and early Christianity. It has, however, not been thought necessary to give space in this work to a detailed account of doctrinal history. The development of dogmas is treated, therefore, only in a hasty and compressed introduction, in which the reader will, as far as possible, be spared explanations of mere Church history.

Many learned battles have been fought out over the date at which the worship of the Madonna commenced. Without examining the arguments brought forward by experts, we may take it for granted, on good grounds, that the cult of Mary did not originate in the earliest Christian community. The idea that the Mother of Jesus occupied an exceptional position among mankind, and was thus worthy of homage by the side of her Son, could not have won widespread acceptance among the faithful so long as the immediate apostolical traditions were still living. The distinctive features in the Catholic Church's figure of the Madonna are in many respects so openly at strife with the narratives of the canonical gospels, that a far-reaching work of interpretation must have been carried out before the text of the Bible could be brought into harmony with the demands of the cult of Mary. To understand the

course of this development, it is necessary to examine what is recorded of the Mother of Jesus in the oldest gospels.

If we read through the narrative books of the New Testament without preconceived opinions, we cannot avoid being surprised at the inconspicuous place there allotted to Mary. In S. Mark's Gospel—which according to most modern critics must be regarded as the earliest of the Synoptic Gospels—the Holy Virgin is only mentioned once (iii. 31-35), namely, in the story of how Jesus replied, when told that His mother and brothers called for Him, "whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother." This utterance, which is introduced with unimportant variations in the first and third gospels also (Matthew xii. 46-50, Luke viii. 19-21), certainly does not indicate that the Saviour desired to raise Mary above all other human beings. Rather He seems to wish to deny that He was bound to His mother by any natural bond of kinship entitling her to a place of honour by His side.[1] Such a thought is expressed still more clearly in S. Luke's narrative of how Jesus rebukes the woman of the people who lifted up her voice to praise His mother: "But He said: yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 27-28).

These utterances gain all the more importance if placed in connection with the fact that Mary is never spoken of as partaking in Jesus' work of teaching. The canonical gospels even leave us in ignorance as to the position His mother occupied in relation to her Son's mission. Were it not for the short mention of her in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles — which refers to the time after Jesus' death — we should not even know if she had attached herself to His party.

The words of S. Mark (iii. 21), that Jesus' mother and friends feared that His mind was deranged, do not show that Mary was convinced of her Son's divine nature and calling; and we seek in vain for her name in the lists of those who followed Jesus during the decisive events in His life. Only S. John's Gospel (which is generally considered to date from a later period than the others) ascribes to the mother a place by the Cross; but not even here—and still less in the Synoptic Gospels—is Mary named among those who shared in the great events after the crucifixion. To judge from the canonical narrative, she was not present when Christ was laid in the grave; and in the story of how the pious women go to the grave with salves and ointments, there is special mention among these women of Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James (Luke xxiv. 10), but not of Mary the mother of Jesus. Again, when Jesus rose from the grave, He showed Himself first to Mary Magdalene, and afterwards to His disciples; but the Bible does not tell us that He revealed himself to that Mary who stood closer to Him than either the disciples or the pious women.

If the canonical writings, therefore, contain little which corresponds with all that Catholic art and theology tell us about the sorrowing mother, yet this does not in itself prove that the doctrine of the Roman Church definitely conflicts with the oldest traditions. For, according to the Catholic explanation, the name of Jesus' mother has often been intentionally omitted in the Gospels, since it could not in any way be even questioned that she above all others supported her Son during His sufferings.[2] Such an argument, however, can only be applied when we have to account for the lack of reference to the Holy Virgin. It has no

weight as against those Bible passages in which Mary is spoken of, but spoken of in words which cannot be harmonised with the dogmas as to her distinctive characteristics. The Evangelists, indeed, leave the mother out of view when they portray their Master's greatness and suffering, and in doing so they give the imagination full scope to picture for itself the Madonna's part in the Passion story; but they could not do otherwise than notice the mother when they had to speak of God's human birth, and to describe His life as a human child. In the first chapters of the Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Luke, therefore, Mary is the real protagonist; and in these chapters there are some expressions which would be entirely unintelligible if during the earliest period the Madonna had in reality been regarded as Catholic dogma would have us think her.

We need not, however, attach any great weight to the much-discussed Bible passages, in which mention is made of "Jesus' brothers and sisters." These words have, indeed, led Jewish and Protestant critics to assert that, after the birth of Jesus, Mary bore some earthly children to Joseph, and that consequently she did not remain a virgin throughout her life. In support of such a conclusion there have been quoted also those expressions in the New Testament in which Jesus has been specially described as Mary's *first-born* son (Matthew i. 25, Luke ii. 7). But it has been urged on the other side that the title "first-born," which in the Mosaic law carried with it a judicial privilege, was often applied even to sons who had no younger brothers or sisters.[3] It has further been advanced that the expression "brothers" can well be understood in a wider meaning, *i.e.* as referring to half-brothers or cousins.[4] Catholic apologists have, therefore, been able to repulse,

with a certain success, what was to them a disturbing accusation, to wit that she who had borne a God could later lower herself to be the mother of human children.

On the other hand, the fact that S. Matthew, in speaking of Joseph's relationship to Mary (i. 25), quite evidently refers to an earthly connection between them *after* Jesus' birth, has been a bad stumbling-block for the dogmatists.[5] Some authors have tried to evade this inconvenient expression by means of a philological explanation,[6] while others have chosen the safer way of ignoring it entirely.[7] An isolated passage can, indeed, be easily overlooked by the less careful critics. But it seems impossible, at least for one who is no theologian, to stifle those objections to the dogma of Mary's virginal motherhood which are raised by the Evangelists' accounts of Jesus' descent. As is well known, it is emphatically asserted that the Saviour was God's Son, and not begotten by any human father; but at the same time it is stated that as a man he belonged to the old Jewish royal family, that he was "a lord of David's line." To prove his right to this title, S. Matthew and S. Luke produced two pedigrees, which begin, one with Adam and the other with Abraham, but which both end with Joseph—that Joseph who, according to the doctrine of all Christian Churches, was indeed Mary's husband but not Jesus' father. In Luke's text the genealogical tree is introduced at once with an assertion that Jesus was, "as was believed, the son of Joseph." It must strike everybody that the Evangelists quote as proof a document which, according to their own admissions, has no application to the case in point.

If we turn to theological literature, we seek in vain for any solution of this contradiction. Any one who has not previously committed himself to a definite attitude,

can never be convinced that, as modern commentators assert, the pedigrees really referred to Mary and not to Joseph. There is only one interpretation which can bring clearness into this involved story, and this interpretation does not harmonise with the doctrine of the virginal motherhood: that people were inclined to prove Jesus' descent from David through Joseph (and did not wish to or could not find any connection with David in the person of Mary) must have been due to the fact that a relationship was earlier assumed between Jesus and the man whom the Church calls his earthly *foster father*. We are, therefore, justified in supposing that the genealogical portions of the Gospels date from a period when the dogma of the divine conception had not yet been developed.[8]

In support of this view we may refer to the doctrines of certain religious communities which long survived by the side of the orthodox Church, and which probably represent the opinions of the earliest generations. The so-called Jewish Christians, the "Ebionites," never recognised that Jesus had been born otherwise than as a man. In His resurrection they saw a miracle sufficiently great to enable them to dispense with the dogma of the miraculous conception, and they believed that it was not until His baptism that He assumed His divine nature. In the canonical account of the baptism we can still, in the opinion of some critics, recognise traces of such a view, which has, therefore, been supposed to have prevailed among the compilers of the lost original Gospel.[9] For that generation, or for those generations which adopted this view, the sacred history proper only began at the moment where the Gospel of S. Mark commences—that is to say, Jesus was regarded as something more than a man, only from the moment

when the dove descended over His head at His baptism. Mary might, indeed, appear to these Jewish Christians as a venerable figure—for she had been mother to Him who was to become a God; but she could not herself be considered a holy being; she had never taken part in any miracle, and she was as yet no Madonna. There was, therefore, no occasion to occupy oneself with her personal life more than is done in S. Mark's Gospel.

This first period in the history of the idea of the Madonna cannot, however, have had a long duration. In the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Luke we already meet with a fully developed idea of Jesus' supernatural birth, and it is not difficult to understand the original reason why the Christian faith was no longer able to retain the view which had prevailed in the earliest community. For the more Christianity spread among heathen peoples, the more it must have been influenced by the heathen way of looking at things. As is well known, all the ancient mythologies contained traditions of heroes and demi-gods who were born supernaturally of a divine father and a human mother. What is more noteworthy, there was even mention—*e.g.* in the myths of Buddha, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and Plato—of cases of miraculous birth, in which the father had been a god or spirit, and the mother had been, and moreover remained after the birth, an earthly virgin. These old and precious ideas of the supernatural origin of great men were not willingly renounced by those who accepted the new religion;[10] nor was it necessary to make such a sacrifice, because men thought that they could recognise in the Jewish traditions something corresponding to the heathen legends. In the Greek septuagint translation of the Old Testament, Isaiah's famous prophecy—as to the *young woman* who should

bear her people's Saviour Immanuel (vii. 14)—was rendered as a prophecy about a *virgin* who should bear him. Instead of the Hebrew word *alma* there had been introduced, not its exact equivalent *νεᾶνις*, but the word *παρθένος*.[11] Thus a fatal mistake, of which the seventy translators were guilty, brought about that confusion of heathen fables and Jewish tradition which still lies at the root of the creeds of all the Christian Churches. By applying the old prophecy to the hero of the new religion, it could be shown that Jesus Immanuel came into the world by means of a miracle similar to that by which the ancient gods and goddesses were born. In this idea the converts could find food for that belief in the miraculous which their own mythologies had fostered in them.

We must not suppose, however, that only former heathens appreciated the doctrine of the Saviour's supernatural birth. The idea served the needs of religious polemics too well to be thrust aside by Christian apologists. There had, indeed, been spread among Jews and heathens many slanderous tales concerning the holy Virgin, which could not be without effect on the ideas of her Son's dignity.[12] Even if it had been successfully proved that Mary never had any earthly lover, but lived as a faithful wife to Joseph, yet a struggle had still to be fought against all those unbelievers who could not see anything divine in a man whose father and mother, brothers and sisters, were human beings like themselves (Matthew xiii. 56). Both calumny and doubt, however, were unanswerably refuted by referring to the supernatural and virginal birth. Therefore the error of translation in the text of the Greek Bible was steadfastly adhered to, and all those who wished to correct the old mistake were persecuted. When in the

time of Hadrian, the old Rabbi Aquila introduced into his literal rendering of the Old Testament the expression "young woman," instead of "virgin," he was accused of having attacked, with deliberate malice, one of the fundamental truths of Christianity.[18] The Church's conception soon proved victorious over all the philological science of heretics; and when the opposition had been silenced, the idea of the Saviour's person had become quite different from that which had probably prevailed among the earliest communities. Messias, it was said, had not been born in the same way as other men, and therefore He, the virgin-born, was from His very birth, and even before His birth, a God. Believers needed not confine themselves to worshipping an adult Jesus who partook of a higher nature only after His baptism—the very child was worthy to be honoured and praised with devout veneration. Starting from this line of thought, we should logically arrive at the dogma of Mary's sanctity, *i.e.* at the cult of the Madonna, who bore God in her virgin womb.

The agitation against the Ebionite doctrines of the Saviour's purely natural birth might, however, be carried so far as to lead to a neglect of His mother's importance. When people had once begun to emphasise the supernatural element in Jesus' real nature, they were in many cases driven to conceive of His whole earthly existence as a mere illusion. He was too high and great, it was said, to stand in any kind of relationship to His human kinsfolk. In order to defend the Church's doctrine, it was advantageous that Joseph could be looked upon as merely a foster-father; but as a result of further progress in this direction Mary's position in the religious hierarchy was imperilled. For it was easy to see in her also only a foster-mother of the

incarnate God. Indeed, it was stated by certain gnostic sects that God the Father and the Holy Spirit had been Jesus' real parents.[14] If such a view had become predominant in the Church no worship of the Madonna could ever have arisen. It is not for an outsider to determine whether religious life would have gained or lost thereby, but it is at any rate certain that religious art would have missed its most grateful and important subject. For the dogma which became the Church's dogma, after the opinions of both the Ebionites and the gnostic Doketists had been successfully crushed, is one which, better than any other, satisfied the demands of aesthetic production and of aesthetic feelings. Mary's actual motherhood was emphasised as against those who denied her physical relationship to the God-man; while, on the other hand, her virginity was emphasised as against those who disbelieved in the Child's divine nature and supernatural birth. In changing formulae, but with unvarying import, the philosophy of beauty has always raised a demand for the blending of ideal purity and tangible reality. This demand cannot be more perfectly fulfilled than in the Church's paradox concerning Mary: a woman who is virgin and mother; who is entirely human, yet bears God in her body; who is sufficiently high to be reverently worshipped, yet is sufficiently near to be reached by affection. The Catholic Madonna is a mythical creation, just as, from an agnostic point of view, every personal and anthropomorphic god is a myth; but if we judge myths merely as artistic creations, we must recognise that no god or goddess has given its worshippers such an ideal as the Mary of Christian art and poetry.

It is important to establish the fact that the fundamental traits in the Madonna ideal, namely, purity and

sublimity, can be recognised already in the description of Mary given by S. Matthew and S. Luke. The contradictions in the accounts of the genealogy of Jesus prove indeed, as was said above, that the authors of the first and the third gospels depended upon older texts, dating from a time when His supernatural birth was not yet recognised. On the other hand, the same contradictions show that when these gospels were compiled an attempt was made to bring the traditions of the first Christian generation into harmony with a newer conception. It was this aim that lay at the foundation of the clumsy editorial addition at the beginning of S. Luke's pedigree to the effect that Jesus, "as was believed," was the son of Joseph. Orthodox criticism was not aroused by the unreasonableness of the introduction by the Evangelist of a pedigree, the importance of which was denied at its starting-point. All the features in the sacred narrative which alluded to a natural course of events were overlooked, and attention was fixed only upon the miraculous element in the legends of the Annunciation and Conception. It was all the easier to emphasise merely the supernatural points, because in the latest of the synoptic books certain expressions were to be found which contained an undoubted glorification of Mary's person. S. Luke speaks of her as "full of grace," and as "blessed among women." This use of terms does not, indeed, prove that Mary had already become the object of any cult; but it does show that in the middle of the second century certain conditions necessary for the development of the Madonna cult already existed.[15] During this period we might expect to find the Holy Mother pictured in art or sung in poetry. However, the time was not yet come when Mary was to play a prominent part in Christian devotional life.

In order that the Holy Virgin should take a dominating place among Christian conceptions, it was necessary that the ideas of her purity and sublimity should be emphasised more than they were in the meagre descriptions of the Evangelists. This result was brought about by the quarrels and disputes which occupied the religious life of the faithful during the fourth and fifth centuries. Here we must first take into account the stream of asceticism which broke over the Western Church at this time. The fact that men began to regard with fear and shrinking everything belonging to earthly life, favoured the development of the Mary dogma in a double sense. The more people saw uncleanliness in the processes of human life, the more were they driven to accentuate the idea of the perfect purity of the Mother of God. She was, it was said, not only a virgin in her motherhood, but throughout her life she had been protected from every physical and mental pollution. Only from such a being could the Highest have been born without a profanation of His Godhead. But if the solicitude of pious thought for the Holy of holies thus gave an increased importance to the doctrine of Mary's absolute virginity, this doctrine in its turn promoted the ideas of her holiness. For according to the severe and life-hating outlook, asceticism was a bloodless martyrdom, which was quite as pleasing to God as a bloody one.[16] It was, therefore, so men thought, by reason of personal merit that Mary was able to serve as Mother to the Highest. Previously her person had been to some extent thrust aside in favour of the men and women who had suffered death for their faith, but now her rank became as high as theirs. She was worshipped in cloisters and in the huts of hermits as the perfect model for all pious

monks and nuns. She was regarded as the natural protectress of those who desired to realise in their lives the ascetic ideals, and her purity was glorified by those authors who desired to develop in their readers a contempt for the joys of earthly existence.[17]

Though the ascetic movement thus lay at the root of the ideas of Mary's sinlessness, yet it could not immediately influence theological literature proper. It was now, as always, the needs of religious controversy which led to the doctrine being defined in a dogmatic formula. For in the fourth century, as at the time when the gospels were written, fierce battles had to be fought out with unbelievers who refused to accept the Church's point of view. The same passages about Jesus' "brothers and sisters," and about Jesus as Mary's first-born, that had already given rise to the ancient Ebionites' disparaging assertions in regard to the Mother of God, were again brought to the fore in the fourth century by opponents of the ascetic morality. Thus Jovinianus, the friend of Hieronymus's youth, sought, by referring to Mary's sons and daughters, to defend earthly marriage against the condemnation of moralisers. In the course of the controversy which as a consequence flamed up between him and Hieronymus, the Madonna's virginity was demonstrated with the aid of subtle arguments from the Old Testament prophets. At the same time Ambrosius, with a less violent but equally ingenious dialectic, was contending against Bonosius, who had likewise ventured to assert that Mary had borne children to Joseph after the birth of Jesus. Criticism and doubt could not shake the belief in the virginity of the Mother of God. Their only result was that the doctrine was held more firmly than before.[18]

The second of the two dogmas fundamental to

the Madonna cult also received its logical justification and its paradoxical exaggeration during the struggles against "heretical errors." After the Church Council at Nicaea in 325 had determined that the Son was of the same nature as the Father, the custom of speaking of Mary as a *theotókos*—a Mother of God—grew more and more common. Especially the Eastern fathers Athanasius, Ephraim Syrus, Eusebius, and Chrysostomus made frequent use of this name in their writings.[19] Just as they did not weary of dilating upon the miracle of a virgin being able to bear a child and yet remain a virgin, so also they praised in pompous theological rhetoric this second wonder: that a created being had given birth to its own Creator. Such expressions, however, could not but challenge the criticism of those who were unwilling entirely to subordinate their reason to faith, and the contradictions only resulted in the dogma winning greater power over the minds of the orthodox. Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, was the *advocatus diaboli*, who against his will did more than any one else indirectly to promote the worship of Mary as Mother of God.[20]

Jovinianus and Bonosius represented the view which had been held by the Ebionites. Nestorius, in his doctrine, expressed a conception which agreed to a certain extent with the assertions of the Doketists. Like them, he did not admit that the two natures of the Saviour entered into a complete union. In the passion and humiliation the Divine Being had no part, and it was in his opinion only the man that had been born of Mary. The idea that the Highest Himself submitted to the conditions of earthly life was, therefore, an abomination against which a Christian ought to protest with all his might, and Nestorius did not hesitate

publicly to attack those who worshipped the infant Child as a God and its mother as a fostress of God. His zeal even caused him to create a disturbance in the church where Bishop Proclus had preached in glorification of Mary *theotókos*, and he was not satisfied with condemning the current Madonna worship by word of mouth. He disseminated his views in small pamphlets which circulated among the Eastern communities and were even spread among the monks and hermits in Egypt. In these regions, however, he was met by an opponent who would not allow him to continue his agitation unhindered. S. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, confuted his views in a circular letter directed to all the cloisters in Egypt. This was the beginning of a duel between Cyril and Nestorius, which in fierceness and importance can only be compared with that between Arius and Athanasius.

The decisive encounter was waged in 431 at the great and universal Church Council at Ephesus, at which the doctrine of Mary's personality and her relation to the Trinity were definitely fixed. There is no need here to go into all the parliamentary and unparliamentary stratagems by which either party, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, sought to win the advantage over the other. Recourse was had, perhaps more than at any subsequent period, to systematic obstruction. Forcible steps were taken to silence opponents, and people did not hesitate even to imprison too contentious antagonists. The result of all these transactions was that late in the autumn, when most of the participants were wearied out by the debates and ill or impoverished by their enforced residence in a foreign town, the orthodox party—that which wins bears the title for the future—received the assent both of the Council and the

Emperor to the doctrine that Mary was a Mother of God. The *theotókos* dogma had issued victoriously from the strife, and Ephesus could boast of being the birthplace of the official Madonna cult.

It seems as if it must have been something more than a mere coincidence that it was from this town that the worship of the Virgin Mother was proclaimed. It was in Ephesus that the Evangelist John had lived during the latter part of his life, and it was with him that Jesus' mother found a home after her Son's death. For this reason a local tradition had developed to the effect that the Holy Virgin was buried at Ephesus. The church in which the Council met was the first and, at that time, the only church in Christendom which had been devoted to the worship of the Madonna. She had been prayed to here long before any other place had accorded her any prominent rank among the great saints. Thus the Church and the cult seem in this case too to have been associated with the place where the saint's body had been buried.[21]

There is, however, no foundation for the supposition that Mary either lived or died at Ephesus. This supposition, indeed, conflicts with the majority of the Apocryphal narratives.[22] It is easy, therefore, to see in the Asiatic local legends a survival of old heathen myths. The Madonna, so one is apt to imagine, might have taken in the cult of the Ephesians the place of some divinity which had been expelled. It would be neither the first nor the last time that Christian theology had met with an ancient tradition and absorbed heathen conceptions. Besides, the moment must have been particularly favourable for such a fusion, for as a result of theological speculation an idea had been formed

of the Madonna's perfections, which was calculated to make her the object of a cult similar to those of the heathen gods and goddesses.

All these suppositions win convincing probability if we think of the kind of memories which were attached to the place where the great Church Council was held. From primitive times Ephesus had been the centre for the worship of a goddess who united in herself the virtues of virginity and motherhood: Artemis, the lofty divinity of hunting, of the moon, of child-birth and chastity. Her temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world, and her name one of the mightiest in antique mythology. Even from the Bible we can get some idea of her greatness. When Paul tried to preach at Ephesus, he met with opposition from all the goldsmiths who gained a livelihood by selling small models of the city's temple. If this man, they said, is allowed to continue changing the people's belief, not only will our craft die out, but there is danger also that "the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." At this speech the people became full of wrath and ran together through the streets calling out: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts xix. 24-29).

The new religion had brought the temple of the goddess into obscurity even more quickly and more completely than could have been feared. Her magnificence was destroyed for the space of some generations, and the place of her cult lost its importance. But when Cyril and his party succeeded in establishing the dogma that the Virgin Mary was the Mother of God, it was as if the old cry had gone forth over the world with a new proclamation: Great is the *Madonna* of the

Ephesians. The goddess of the Christians was greater than Diana, her name was mightier than any of the heathen gods, and all the wonders of the ancient world were to be put into the shade by the buildings that would be raised by her worshippers. Even the old goldsmiths who demonstrated against Paul would have felt comforted could they have survived until the Council at Ephesus. The manufacture of small temple models, indeed, gained no fresh importance, but it soon appeared that the Christian cult gave a far better support to art and craftmanship than the heathen religions. The struggles that arose over the *theotókos* dogma immediately had a stimulating effect on aesthetic production. Pictures were made of the Madonna, in order thereby to confess that Mary had not been an ordinary human being, but a woman who had borne God in her body. Every one who wished to show his hatred for the defeated heresy procured a statue or an image of the Holy Mother with the Child at her breast. The form of the Madonna was introduced in painting or mosaic on the walls of the church, her likeness was set up in men's homes, and her picture was embroidered on garments and used to decorate furniture.[23] If we compare the rich production of pictures of the Madonna, which dates from after the middle of the fifth century, with the poor output of the earlier centuries, we can understand why many investigators consider the year 431 as the birth-year of the representations of Mary in art. Such a conception, however, is too much of a generalisation, and can easily be overthrown by referring to the particular portrayals of the Holy Virgin which are met with even in the earliest Christian art. It seems probable, on the other hand, that the Madonna pictures were generally worshipped as objects of the cult only after 431.[24]

In the history of literature and poetry, the Council of Ephesus marks no decisive epoch. As mentioned above, Mary was glorified in speech and writing as a Mother of God even during the fourth century. The fact, however, that the *theotókos* dogma was determined as the Church's universal doctrine, caused Mary's physical connection with the Divinity to be emphasised in liturgical poetry and in sermons more than ever before. And the confessional aim led to a preference for the use of just those expressions and similes against which Nestorius had directed his criticism. The thought that a created being had borne its own Creator and that an earthly virgin had enclosed in her womb Him who was greater than the worlds, was thus varied in numberless repetitions.

The ideas included in the dogmas as to Mary's fundamental characteristics can be worked out and added to indefinitely. Devotional literature has found in them a subject which right up to recent centuries showed itself as attractive as it was profitable. Any essentially new conceptions, however, could not be introduced into the doctrine as it was fixed during the first centuries. The theological development did not indeed stand still. On the contrary, attempts were made, and are still being made to-day, to strengthen logically the ideal conceptions of a pure and holy Mother of God. But all the fierce struggles concerning the Madonna's nature which were fought out during the Middle Ages and the modern period are nothing but repetitions of that dispute which during the second century caused the formulation of the texts of the gospels, and which during the fifth century led to the resolutions of the Council of Ephesus. When the final results have been attained,

the corollaries have only been drawn of the argumentation of earlier generations. In the course of their influence upon one another the two fundamental dogmas have been accentuated by a more and more paradoxical formula. Mary's absolute virginity proves her worthiness to serve as a dwelling for the Highest; while her capacity as Mother of God presupposes her perfect purity. With regard to the first dogma, the development reached its culmination in the doctrine that the Madonna was purified from sin even when in her mother's womb. As to the second dogma, the pious are still waiting for official sanction for their belief that Mary's body, the tabernacle of God, was freed from mortal laws and was taken up to heaven unchanged; but this belief has none the less, as will appear from the subsequent chapters, been as important for aesthetic life as any of the dogmas instituted and formally ratified by the Church.

CHAPTER XI

THE GOSPEL OF MARY

So held she through her girlhood ; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God
Grows and is quiet.

D. G. ROSSETTI, *Mary's Girlhood.*

IN the old French invocations to Mary there is a frequently recurring expression of which we are reminded every time we attempt to understand the treatment of the Virgin in art and poetry: "Marie, océan des grâces." The virtues of the Madonna and the grace she wields have appeared to her worshippers incomprehensibly great. Religious ecstasy deprives the pious of all the measures by which they can gauge the object of their devotion. Therefore they cannot compare her with anything less than an ocean. It is the typically Catholic veneration that expresses itself in this rhetorical picture ; but it is not necessary to be a Catholic, or to share the feelings of the religious poets, in order to understand this bold simile. Even one who examines with cold and objectively scientific attention all the works of art to which the cult of Mary gave form and character is seized by an impression of standing before boundless expanses. Mary's influence on aesthetic life and aesthetic production—that indeed is a subject vast as an ocean. If one approaches this wide field of study as an uninitiated stranger, one finds it as difficult at first to

make out one's bearings as upon an open sea; and even if one succeeds in gaining a certain bird's-eye view of the scene, one is met by the equal difficulty of observing a proper balance in the treatment of so extensive a material. It will be necessary, therefore, in the following chapters to keep a sharp eye upon our essential purpose, so as not to be lured into delusive byways.

A primary measure of precaution has already been taken. From the preceding inquiry it should be clear that no attempt will be made to deal with the whole of the production by which art served the purpose of the Madonna cult. The belief of the pious in the influence of the Virgin as an intercessor for mankind, and that worship of Mary which is based on the conceptions of her share in the great work of Atonement, fall entirely outside the scope of this work. We are concerned only with the pictorial and poetical motives in which the thought of the Virgin Mother's purity and sublimity have been expressed, *i.e.* with those aesthetic manifestations and ideas which are derived from the conception of Mary as a shrine for the incarnate God. In our account of this subject, in order to avoid a wearisome prolixity, only so many examples will be introduced as are necessary for the argument in each special case; and to avoid repetitions, the examples from art and poetry will be arranged, not in strictly chronological order, but according to their logical connection with one another.

In accordance with this plan, it seems most natural to begin with the legends concerning the Madonna's life. After the epic poems and the narrative representations of plastic art have been treated of, no long investigation will be necessary to explain the manner in which

the conceptions of the Madonna prevail in the symbols, allegories, and similes of lyrical poetry and devotional art.

In the canonical narrative, as is well known, Mary's history commences with the Annunciation. The Bible gives us no information about her earlier life, and her personality is characterised only in meagre traits. Such a state of things, however, could not satisfy the Madonna's worshippers, who demanded as complete a knowledge as possible of her fortunes. It was quite unavoidable, therefore, that the Mother of God, like the less important saints, should become the subject of many legends; so the imagination of believers made claims that had to be met by adding to the Bible texts. The legends of the Madonna were still more necessary than those of the saints, because the gospels, even in their final edition, retained many contradictions which provoked the criticism of doubters. Even if the orthodox, as mentioned above, could themselves be convinced by S. Luke's attempts to mask the old traditions which lay at the root of the pedigrees, yet there were outside the community many inquirers who had an eye for the weak points in the sacred history. The difficulty of finding a refutation of the attacks of these blasphemers in the canonical gospels has clearly contributed to the origin of the oldest known legend of Mary: the Apocryphal, so-called Protoevangelion, which was, as early as during the first centuries, often quoted by the Fathers in their contentions with unbelievers.

In the Protoevangelion, or as it is also called, the Gospel of James, Mary is the chief character, and her life is described in a manner designed to forestall

all heathen or heretical interpretations. In order that this history, with its emphasising of the Madonna's perpetual virginity, might win an increased authority, it was ascribed to James the younger—*i.e.* to the very Apostle whom the doubters asserted to have been a younger son of Mary. In order, while retaining the dogma of Jesus' supernatural birth, to preserve the doctrine that he was born of David's line, the Mother of God herself was represented as a descendant of David—a hypothesis which, we may say in passing, has been adopted in our own days by many Protestant theologians. Further, in order that no doubt should exist as to the Madonna's absolute purity and holiness, she too, it was said, was born into the world in a manner which, if not actually supernatural, was at any rate unusual and supernormal. After the model of the Old Testament stories and of the narrative of John the Baptist's family, Mary was made the child of a mother who throughout her earlier life had been barren. As a correspondence to Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joachim and Anna were introduced: a pious couple who grieved over their childlessness and finally received, through messenger angels, the promise of the birth of a holy child. Like the parents of Samuel, Samson and John, Joachim and Anna dedicate their child to God's service. Mary becomes a female Nazarite, who takes the vow of chastity for the whole of her life, and her marriage with Joseph is made out to be a feigned marriage which cannot give rise to doubts of her virginity.

Such is the general tendency of the book which is the fundamental writing of the Catholic cult of Mary. Although the Protoevangile has never been officially recognised by the Church, it has often been quoted by

the side of the New Testament narratives. Special Church festivals have even been instituted to commemorate events which are mentioned only in this Apocryphal gospel of Mary. As regards art and poetry, "James's" history of the Mother of God has literally been a canonical writing. During the Middle Ages it was the basis of numerous metrical lives of Mary, and it afforded material for the series of pictures of the Madonna's history which were so often represented in painting and sculpture during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It is the Protoevangile, therefore, which should form a natural starting-point for every portrayal of the Holy Virgin's life;[1] and there is all the more reason for giving a detailed account of this writing, because the oldest legend of Mary's life is none too well known in Protestant countries.

"James's narrative of the birth of God's most holy mother Mary" begins with a little family romance concerning the Virgin's parents. We learn that Joachim, who is to be her father, is a wealthy and respected man, who generously shares his superfluous riches with the poor. He has been accustomed, over and above that part which he was compelled by law to offer in the Temple, to give a part to God as penance for his sins, and a part to the people. By reason of his piety and his rank he has also—so it would appear from the text, which is here obscure in its brevity—the privilege of offering his gift before anybody else.[2] On one occasion, however, when on the Lord's Day he enters the Temple to make his offering, he is pushed aside by "Reuben," who considers that Joachim has no right to enjoy any kind of precedence. This Reuben, of whom no further details are given, is probably a Jewish father who can boast of a numerous family,[3]

for it is said that he looks Joachim in the face, and contemptuously addresses him as the man "who had not given any offspring to Israel." The scorn which, according to Jewish ideas, was implied by such an accusation sinks deep into the pious man.[4] When, further, after having consulted the nation's registers, he finds that he is actually alone in not having "given any offspring to Israel," he is seized with a bitter sorrow. The only thing that can comfort him is the thought of Abraham, to whom God sent a son even in his ripe old age. He resolves, therefore, to seek help from the Lord, in order, if possible, still to be delivered from the dishonour that oppresses him. Without even taking leave of his wife, he withdraws to the desert to fast for forty days, and he makes a vow: "I will not go down from this mountain, nor take any food or drink, before the Lord my God hath visited me, and prayers shall be my food and drink."

In Joachim's home, however, his wife Anna has waited in vain for his return from the Temple. She does not know whither he has gone, and she thinks she has lost him for ever. She does not grieve only for the absence of her husband; she is a *Jewish* woman, and therefore she laments in a twofold song of mourning:—

> Bewail must I my widowhood,
> And bewail must I my childlessness.

By this lamentation, however, she breaks "the Lord's day," which ought to be celebrated by happy thoughts,[5] and when Judith, her servant, tries to cheer her she only answers with bitter words. Then Judith turns upon her with the same reproach that Reuben had directed against Joachim: "Why should I wish you any evil for not listening to my words, since the Lord

Himself hath closed thy womb and not given thee any offspring in Israel?"

The correspondence in the stories of the husband and wife is complete. Anna, too, is grieved at heart when she is reminded of her barrenness, and she, too, finds her only comfort in the thought of the old parents in the patriarchal history who were freed from the shame of childlessness in their old age. Heavy as her heart is, she dresses herself—out of respect for the holy day?—in her bridal dress, and washes her head and goes for a walk in the garden. With a direct appeal to the miracle which God had once before allowed to take place, she beseeches Him for the good fortune she has so long had to dispense with. "Hear my prayer! As Thou didst bless Sarah's womb and send her a son Isaac." But the prayer gives her no relief, for everything she sees around her reminds her only of her humiliation. In the laurel tree above her head some sparrows chirp in their nest, and the earth is filled with the abundant fruitfulness of beasts and plants. Anna cannot endure all these impressions, and bursts out into a bitter song of lamentation. She has been born, she sings, for a curse in Israel, she who cannot even be compared with the birds of the air or the beasts of the field. She alone is unfruitful, while both the land and the water bring forth their fruit in due season, and praise the Lord.

At this point the narrative, without any warning, takes quite a different colouring. An angel appears and proclaims that Anna shall bear a child who shall be known throughout the world. Anna answers with a promise that her child shall be offered as a gift to God, and that she will perform a holy service to Him all the days of her life. After the angel some earthly messengers enter to announce Joachim's return; for

he, too, has learned through an angelic vision that his prayer has been heard. He hastens home with new offerings from the mountain: ten pure and spotless lambs for God's Temple, twelve fat calves for the priests and the elders, and a hundred goats for the rest of the people. When he approaches with his herds, Anna stands at the door to meet him. She ran towards him, the story goes, fell upon his neck, and said: "Now I know that God, My Lord, hath richly blessed me. For lo! the widow is no more a widow, and I that was childless shall bear a child." Joachim spends the first day resting at his house. The next day he drives his offerings to the Temple, and there, by seeing the token on the priest's frontal, gains a renewed confirmation that his shame has been removed and that his gift is acceptable.[6]

When the time is accomplished, Anna brings forth her child. Although, according to the Jewish idea, she had reason to lament that this child was not a son, she thankfully praises God for His gift: "My soul does magnify the Lord."[7] When the appointed days were ended, Anna washed herself and gave the child the breast and named it Mary. That is all that the Gospel of James tells us about the birth of the Virgin.

The little child grows up, however, and even in earliest childhood proves that it is unlike other children. When Mary was six months old, the story runs, her mother put her on the ground to see if her limbs would support her, and the girl, who was as precocious as Buddha and Osiris, not only stood upright, but took seven steps and then returned to Anna's bosom.[8] Then her mother lifted her up and vowed: "As the Lord liveth, Mary shall not touch earth again until she has been taken to the sacred precincts of the Temple." It

is the ascetic idea of purity which appears here, and which from this moment becomes more and more prominent in the narrative. In fact, at the age of six months Mary becomes a little cloister maiden, who lives apart from the world's pollution. For Anna prepared her bed-chamber as a holy place, sheltered from anything low or unclean, and she called to her the spotless daughters of the Hebrews to preside over the child's recreation. In their company Mary spends her early years. Only once, it seems, did she leave her little sacrarium. When her first birthday was celebrated, Joachim made a great banquet, to which he invited the "priests and the scribes and the elders and the whole people of Israel," and he brought Mary to the priests and high priests, who blessed her with the highest blessing, than which there is none higher. Then Anna carried the child back to its holy room, gave it the breast, and sang a song of praise to God who had taken away her humiliation. With triumphant pride she addressed him who had scorned her husband: "Who announces to Reuben's sons that Anna feeds a child at her breast, hear, hear! ye twelve tribes, that Anna suckles a child."

When Mary grew older, her parents had to fulfil the promise which had first been given at Anna's annunciation. Joachim wishes to transfer the child to the Temple when she is only two years old, but Anna urges a year's postponement, in order that the little one may not long for her father and mother. When this time has gone by, Mary leaves her home for ever, accompanied by her parents and playfellows. These latter, at Joachim's direction, walk before her with lighted torches, that she may not turn out of the path or be attracted away from the Temple. The old man's

anxiety, however, has apparently been superfluous, for when the child reaches the Temple, she goes of her own accord into the holy rooms. The priest, it is said, received her with blessings, kissed her, and let her sit on the third step of the altar. "And then God poured out His grace over Mary, so that she danced in on her little feet and all the people of Israel loved the child. And her parents went home full of wonder and thankfulness to God that the child had not turned after them. But Mary grew up in the Temple of the Lord like a pecking dove and received her food from the angels' hands."

We see how the cathartic ideas influence every detail in the story of Mary's life. The pure being who lived in a pure room must not be defiled by any earthly food. Only the manna which was made in heaven, and was the food of angels, might enter the body that was to be the dwelling for God. Thus both physically and spiritually the Holy Virgin is separated from all other created beings.

In this connection, however, the author of James's Gospel is guilty of something that may be regarded as at least an inconsistency. However spotless the chosen one may have been, no exception was made on her account to the rule which forbade all full-grown women to be seen within the holy Temple walls. It was perhaps due to an oversight that Mary was not represented as freed from the "impurity" of her sex, but we can also imagine that the priests were considered to have been ignorant of her absolute virginity. However we like to explain it, the gospel expressly states that when Mary was twelve years old the priests took counsel as to what course they should adopt "in order that she should not defile God's sanctuary." It was decided that

the High Priest should pray for Mary in the Holy of holies and await a revelation from the Highest. And the Lord made known His will: all widowers were to be summoned to the Temple, each bringing with him a staff, and he on whose staff a sign appeared was to have Mary to wife. The Virgin's husband, *i.e.* the warder of God's new tabernacle, would thus be selected by a choice similar to that which led to Aaron becoming Israel's high priest (Numbers xvii.).

When the heralds go through the land with bassoons to summon the widowers, the aged Joseph throws down his axe and hastens to the Temple.[9] He is the last to receive his staff back from the High Priest, but when he takes the staff, a dove flies out of it, and settles upon his head. The judgment of God has decided that he shall take the Lord's virgin into his charge. He excuses himself, indeed, by referring to his advanced age, which would render him ridiculous as the husband of so young a wife; but the High Priest does not admit of evasions, and Joseph submits to the oracle and takes Mary with him from the Temple. Characteristically enough, he none the less regards his duty so lightly that he immediately returns to his building work and leaves his young ward alone in the house. "God will protect thee while I am away," he says to her at parting.

Mary's connection with the Temple was not ended, however, by her marriage. The priests resolved to have a new curtain made for the sanctuary, and this work, according to the author of James's Gospel, was to be carried out by unspotted daughters of David's line. When the priests tried to make up the necessary number of spinners, they remembered Joseph's young wife, "who was pure before God." It is here that the

Apocryphal narrator introduces his mention of Mary's royal descent. The Virgin presents herself in the Temple with the other daughters of David, to receive her share of the work. The scarlet and the fine purple threads fall to her lot. She does not work, however, with the other women, but takes the material with her to her home; and it is while she is engaged upon this church work that she receives the Annunciation.

"James," however, with his love of angelic visions, was not content with one annunciation. Mary receives her first tidings one day when she went to the well to fetch water. She does not indeed meet an angel, but she hears a voice saying, "Hail to thee, gracious one, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women." "And she looked to the right and to the left, to see where the voice came from, and went trembling into the house, and put the vessel away from her, and sat down to spin her purple"; and when she had spun the distaff out, an angel appeared to her and announced the great tidings. His greeting corresponds in the main with S. Luke's story. The only noteworthy difference is that according to James it is the *word* of the Almighty which will bring about the miraculous conception. And Mary answers Gabriel with words which constitute a slight yet significant variation of the New Testament's text, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord *before Him*, be it unto me as thou sayest." It seems as if it was desired to emphasise the Madonna's dignity by pointing out that only before the Highest need she bow as a handmaid.[10]

After the chapter on the Annunciation, the Proto-evangile follows in the tracks of the canonical narrative. Between the angel's greeting and the visit to Elizabeth, however, an episode has been inserted relating how

Mary leaves her finished work with the High Priest, and is then, for the third time, blessed by him. She stays three months with Elizabeth, and afterwards secludes herself in her home, to conceal her condition from the children of Israel. Mary, it is said, is sixteen years old when these mysterious events take place.

At this time Joseph returns from his building work. His despair and indignation when he sees how little Mary has been able to take care of herself during his absence are described in much greater detail than in the canonical narrative. He dare not believe in the Virgin's assurances of her innocence, but, on the other hand, he does not wish to expose her to the condemnation of the Israelites as an adulteress. If what she bears in her womb really came from the angels, and she was nevertheless handed over to justice, the blood of an innocent person would be upon his head. The safest plan, therefore, would be to separate himself secretly from Mary. As in S. Matthew's Gospel, however, Joseph is enlightened by an angel vision that it is by the prompting of the Holy Spirit that his ward is about to become a mother. When he has thus become convinced of Mary's virtue, it yet remains for husband and wife to justify themselves before the Temple-folk, for according to the Protoevangile, it was only a formal marriage which united Joseph and Mary.[11] The priests demand to receive the Virgin back just as Joseph had taken her from the Lord's Temple, and they bitterly reproach Mary for having degraded her soul and forgotten her God, "she who had been brought up in the Holy of holies, and received her food from the hand of angels, and danced before God and heard His praises."[12] By submitting to and successfully undergoing the prescribed ordeal—the drinking of cursed water—Joseph and Mary

are released from condemnation, although it does not clearly appear from the narrative if the priests and people were really convinced of their innocence.

The journey to Bethlehem is accounted for and described in the Protoevangile in the same way as in S. Luke's Gospel. The Apocryphal narrative is merely more detailed than the canonical texts. We see how Joseph saddles his ass and lets Mary ride it. One of his sons leads the animal, while the father walks alongside. During this journey a miraculous sign appears, by which, as is so often the case in the legends, the later events of the sacred story are indicated to any one who understands how to interpret the omens. When Joseph, the story runs, looked up at Mary on one occasion, he saw that her face was sorrowful, and he thought sympathetically that she was pained by what she carried in her womb; but when he turned round a moment later she was glad and smiling. Mary herself explains this enigma to him. It was not, thus we must understand the story, any physical sensations that hurt her, who "should not give birth as other women."[13] Her sorrow and her joy originated in a presentiment of all that must happen when her Child has been born, and when for His sake the world has been divided into two opposing camps. For, she says, referring to the story of Rebecca in the book of Moses (Gen. xxv. 22), "I see two peoples with my eyes—the one is full of lamentation and mourning, and the other is full of joy and gladness."

According to the Protoevangile the travellers do not reach Bethlehem before the Child is born. In the midst of the journey Joseph is compelled to lift Mary down from the ass, and look for a place to shelter her. He finds a cave into which he leads his charge, and there he leaves her in the care of his sons. He himself goes

out to seek help in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, and while he is away the great wonder takes place. The whole of nature is arrested in its course, when God is born as a man. "I saw," says Joseph—for in this chapter he is abruptly introduced as the narrator—"that the vault of heaven stood still, and the birds were motionless. Some workmen who had gathered around a dish for their evening meal were checked in their occupation, and gazed petrified towards heaven. The flocks of sheep that were being driven did not stir a step, and the shepherd, who raised his hand to strike them, stood fixed in his threatening attitude till, in a moment, everything resumed its natural course." Thereupon Joseph meets a midwife coming down from the mountain, and he tells her of his young bride who has become a mother through the workings of the Holy Spirit. Then she asks, Is that true? He answers, Come and see. When they have reached the place where he left Mary, the cave is overshadowed by a bright cloud. The woman believes in the miracle, and understands that it is Israel's Saviour who has been born. "In the same moment," thus Joseph continues his tale, "the cloud disappeared from the cave and a great light shone forth, so strong that our eyes could not bear it; and after a while this light too disappeared, whereupon the Child became visible, and it came and took its mother Mary's breast." But the pious woman praised the day which had let her see the great miracle.

In contrast with this woman, who is probably designed to be a type or symbol of pious humanity —she questions, indeed, but lets herself be instructed by the sign—the Protoevangile has introduced a representative of sceptical unbelief. Salome, an Israelite midwife, meets the believing woman, who is wandering

home from Mary's grotto. When she hears from her that a virgin has borne a child, she answers, "As truly as my God liveth, unless I have examined her, I will not believe that a virgin can have a child." Like the Apostle Thomas, she will not be convinced by anything but by the witness of her own hands. Her pusillanimous doubt is punished; the hand which dared to probe what she ought to have believed without proof is paralysed and withered at the same moment as she is convinced of the miracle. But when doubt confesses its error, the sin can be forgiven and the penalty removed. Therefore we are told that Salome's hand regained its power of motion when, on the advice of an angel who revealed himself in the cave, she lifted the Divine Child upon her arm and worshipped it in faithful devotion. That "James," in this episode, desired to attack the theoretical theologians of the time is clear from the words he makes Salome speak when she proceeds to examine the Virgin Mother: "Prepare thyself, it is no small struggle that awaits thee." The word struggle, as A. Meyer has pointed out, can only refer to the struggle which the dogmatists fought out over the question of Mary's virginity.[14]

In the chapter on the worship of the Magi, the Protoevangile does not depart in essentials from Matthew's account. The only notable difference is that the homage does not take place in a stable at Bethlehem, but in the cave where the Child was born. The manger is mentioned later, for it is said that Mary, in order to conceal the Child from Herod's emissaries, wraps it in linen and places it in "an ox's manger." The God-man escapes the danger, but Herod's persecution is turned instead upon the little John, in whose person he fears the predicted King of Israel. By a miracle Elizabeth and her

child are also delivered, for a mountain opens in order to hide them; but Zacharias is murdered in the Temple to satisfy the despot's vengeance.

This abridged review, in which we have striven as far as possible to employ the expressions of the anonymous narrator, is based upon a translation of the oldest known edition of the Gospel of James. The original is a Greek manuscript written by some pious but unlearned man, who gives himself out to be a Jewish Christian. That he did not, however, himself belong to the chosen people appears from his palpable ignorance of the geography of Palestine, and from the mistakes of which he is guilty in his description of the Jewish Temple ceremonies.[15] On the other hand, it is clear that he has a familiar knowledge of Hebrew literature, for Old Testament models can be detected in every chapter of his book,[16] and a purely Jewish atmosphere lends poetry to his treatment of the romance of Joachim and Anna.

By the side of these Hebraic elements there are some features which testify to an acquaintance with the life of the classical nations. The celebration of birthdays was unknown among the Jews and the earliest Christians, but common among the Romans. No pure virgins lived in the Temple at Jerusalem, but the Egyptians had their priestesses of Isis, and the Romans their vestals.[17] The stories of Mary's precocity and of the birth of the Divine Child in a rock cave were probably based on old heathen myths. That Nature, again, is arrested in her course at a critical event is a common motive in folklore, which is well known to all students of popular legends.[18] It was thus from many different sources that the anonymous author, with none too great discrimination, collected the material for his story; but he understood how to

make use of all the various elements for his purpose. Every feature in the narrative serves to emphasise just those qualities of the Virgin Mother which his opponents wished to deny. Naïve and fantastic as the Gospel of James is, it is at the same time an effectively calculated piece of polemic writing. It was and remained an invaluable weapon in the dogmatic discussions as to the nature of the Madonna.

It is, indeed, from the dogmatic literature that we have to seek information as to the date of the writing. According to A. Meyer, James's narrative is quoted by the Fathers from the close of the fourth century. Even in so early an author as Origen, we find quotations from a certain "Book of James," the tendency of which seems to have corresponded with that of the Protoevangile. Justin Martyr, again, brings forward certain information and arguments which recur in the Apocryphal legend. This circumstance does not, of course, justify the assertion that the writing had appeared in its final shape in his time, or even in that of Origen, but it proves that legends concerning Mary circulated among the faithful at the beginning of the second century.[19] It must be left to experts to decide at what moment these legends were fitted together to form the gospel which bears James's name. Here we have only to mention that even the earliest edition of the Apocryphal writing is evidently composed of various older constituent parts. The narratives of Zacharias and Elizabeth, which close the gospel, are thus thought to spring from a special cycle of legends, some fragments of which have been inserted in the Mary history proper. In this history, again, attempts have been made to distinguish two parallel legends, one of which portrayed Mary primarily as a Temple virgin, while the other above all accentuated

her royal origin. The junction of these two legends may be discerned, we are told, in the chapter which tells how, when Joseph left his home, Mary receives the commission to work the Temple curtain.[20] The twofold Annunciation is explained by the fact that these two separate narratives have been fused into one,[21] and the same circumstance further explains the curious statement that Mary was sixteen years old when Joseph returned from his building work, although she was only twelve when he left her. Even if we cared to entertain the improbable assumption that the worthy carpenter abandoned his charge for so long a time, yet it would in any case be strange that James should not have more to tell us about Mary's life during these four years.

More important than the pre-history of the Proto-evangile, which can only be built up by an examination of the oldest manuscripts, is the history of this book. We know that the narratives of Mary's birth, childhood, and marriage were early disseminated in the Eastern Church in Syrian, Armenian, and Arabic translations. The miracles were magnified and embroidered in new variations, some of which are so sharply separated from the original text that they must be regarded as new and independent works. In this way arose the Latin gospel of *pseudo Matthew*, from the period between the fifth and sixth century; the Arabic *gospel of the Saviour's childhood* from the seventh century; the Latin *gospel of Mary's birth*, which is considered to be still younger than the last-named writing; and the Coptic legend of *Joseph the carpenter* from the fourth century.[22] When, during the latter Middle Ages, poetry began to treat religious subjects in modern languages, the old narrative became the subject of further reconstruction; and it gained a new and concrete expression, and an increased power

over the minds of the faithful, through being illustrated in devotional books and on the walls of churches. Thus there developed from the Gospel of James a pious romance, which was composed and completed during centuries and was illustrated by the foremost artists of the Catholic Church.

It is this romance which will be treated chapter by chapter in what follows. The different garbings of the old legend will afterwards be noticed in our account of the representations of the story of Mary in art and poetry. In examining these aesthetic manifestations we shall also have an opportunity of giving an account of the pious tales which were written to complete the Bible narrative of the later events in the Virgin's life.

CHAPTER XII

MARY'S CONCEPTION—SAINT ANNA

Di contro a Pietro vedi seder Anna,
Tanto contenta di mirar sua figlia,
Che non muove occhio per cantare osanna.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, xxxii.

WE are told in S. Luke's Gospel that Mary, when she received the greeting from the messenger angel, asked: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The Virgin did not doubt, say the commentators, for she could not be guilty of any weakness in her faith; but quite humbly she uttered her surprise at a miracle which she could not yet understand.[1] The angel, again, recognised the justness of her astonishment, and willingly answered her question. The Holy Spirit should come over Mary, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her; and by way of further explanation he added: "And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."

That a barren woman might conceive a child in her old age was not, indeed, so incomprehensible as that a virgin should give birth without having known a man; but the lesser miracle paved the way for the greater, and, so to speak, gave a justification for it. Any one who was persuaded by Elizabeth's motherhood that for God

nothing was impossible could more easily believe that Mary had been overshadowed by the Highest Himself. The tardy fruitfulness of her old kinswoman would strengthen the Virgin's certainty that she had "found favour before God." Thus S. Luke represents the events at the Annunciation, but it is quite possible that by letting the angel recount the history of Elizabeth he also desired to combat the doubts which might arise among the readers of his own narrative.

The authors of the Apocryphal legends make use of such argumentation to a still greater extent. According to their account, the miracle of Jesus' birth had already been prepared for by His mother's birth. "James," indeed, does not give any particulars as to the ages of Anna and Joachim, but it seems more than probable that these two, who had given up all hope of having children, were old, like Zacharias and Elizabeth. In the Apocryphal *Evangelium de nativitate Mariae*, it is even expressly said that Anna had been married twenty years before the birth of Mary,[2] and the artistic compositions agree with the religious poems in representing the Virgin's parents as aged. Nature had thus, according to the pious conception, departed from her ordinary course when the Mother of God elect was brought into the world. The supernatural fruitfulness was to a certain extent explained through its happening to a house where unusual conceptions characterised the family. But this was not all. By the extraordinary circumstances of her birth, Mary was placed on a par with some of the most famous characters in Hebrew history.

Isaac, to wit, had been born of a woman who had reached so advanced an age that she herself doubted the prophecy concerning her motherhood (Gen. xvii.-xviii.). Manoa's wife was sterile, and, like Mary and

Anna, she had received through an angelic vision the promise of the birth of her son Samson (Judges xiii.). Finally, the story of Samuel's parents resembles that of Joachim and Anna, as only a model can resemble a faithful copy (1 Sam. i.-ii.).[3] Thus, Israel's wise judge, one of its patriarchs, and its national hero had all been born, if not by a miracle, at any rate by an exception from the ordinary course of events. They, and Mary with them, had partaken of that distinction which popular imagination so often ascribes to its favourite figures; for, according to a common superstition which is visible in many well-known legends, the heroes and the great prophets are from their very origin independent of natural laws.[4] That life had set aside its ordinary conditions for Mary's sake, and allowed an old and barren woman to bear a child, must therefore have been considered a confirmation of her greatness.[5]

The advanced age at which Joachim and Anna became parents might, however, influence the idea of the Madonna's personality in yet another way. It must have been easy to assume that the old couple could no longer experience earthly love. The child born to them must therefore have been weighed down by original sin to a lesser extent than other children.[6] In this way, it may be argued, the legend of Mary's birth must have promoted the doctrine of her original sinlessness; and, indeed, in mediaeval authors we often find passages in which Mary's purity is explained by referring to the passionless relationship between her parents. These arguments, however, would not in themselves have achieved real importance unless the old Gospel of James, in another and more indirect way, had exercised a powerful influence upon the development of the idea of the Madonna.

To explain this influence we must first observe the cult in which the worship of Mary expressed itself. In this case, as in so many others, it was the liturgy that conveyed the influence of the legends to the dogmas. The critical events related in the Protoevangile's account of Mary's life were celebrated by the Church with special festivals, and as some of these festivals could not be justified by existing dogmas, new doctrines were set up merely in order to account for them.

The oldest of the festivals which refer to the Apocryphal history is that of Mary's birthday. It is stated by competent investigators that, as early as the sixth or seventh century, the Eastern Church honoured the Mother of God with a festival on her birthday. During the course of the seventh century this festival—which was celebrated on September 8th—was introduced at Rome. Afterwards it gradually spread among the Western communities, and in the ninth century it was universally recognised throughout Christian Europe.[7] At first it does not seem to have aroused misgivings among theologians. It was thought quite natural that believers should thank God for the gift of that being who was to be mother of the Highest Himself; but after the dogmatists began to make the Church calendar the object of a stricter study, it could not be concealed that the festival of September 8th separated itself in one important respect from all the other saints' days. For the Christian festivals were not celebrated on the days when the saints or martyrs entered this sinful and impure world, but on the days when, by their death, they were "born into Heaven." However piously a man might have lived, yet his earthly birth was too polluted for the community to be able to celebrate its memory. From this rule there was only one departure;

and that was, indeed, an exception which confirmed the rule.

John the Baptist was the only person so highly honoured as to have the memory of his entrance into life celebrated. In his case, however, certain reasons could be quoted to explain his exceptional position among the saints. For of him the angel had predicted: "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb" (Luke i. 16); and of him S. Luke says in the chapter on the Visitation: "When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost" (i. 41). The Saviour's forerunner, who had been miraculously conceived by an old and barren woman,[8] had thus received a divine sanctification in his mother's body even before coming into contact with the outer world. He was pure when he was born, and accordingly there was nothing incorrect in the Church's celebration of the first day of his life.[9] It was only right that all the other saints should give place to him who had seen the light of day as a sinless being.

The Mother of God, however, had received her festival day once for all, and it was difficult even for the strictest dogmatists to deprive her of this honour. It was simpler and more in consonance with the ideas of the Madonna's worshippers to let the liturgy remain, and to suit the doctrine to its needs. Indeed, there was nothing over-bold in supposing that God gave His own mother a part of the same intra-uterine sanctification which had been granted to John and which had earlier been accorded even to Jeremiah (Jeremiah i. 5). Mary, too, it was said, had been purified when in her mother's womb, and she too had been sinless at her birth. S. Bernard, the Madonna's glorifier *par excellence*, was

the first to bring forward this idea, and in doing so, he quoted as a decisive proof of Mary's purity the very festival which was celebrated on September 8th. "Her birth," said he, "would not be the occasion for a festival if she had not been born holy."[10]

With this assertion S. Bernard completely broke with Church tradition. However much the Virgin's virtues had been exalted, and however definitely her freedom from all real sin had been asserted, it had none the less been held that it was only when God became incarnate in her womb that she was released from original sin.[11] The new view, however, was so acceptable to the Madonna's worshippers that before long Mary was universally regarded as holy from her very birth. This was the first result of the influence exercised on dogmatic theology by the liturgy, which was based upon the Protoevangile's narrative of Anna's miraculous motherhood.

The old legend was, however—also through the mediation of the liturgy—to influence the doctrine of the Virgin's original purity in a still more thorough manner. Some centuries after the Madonna's birthday was recognised in the West, there came from the East a new festival, which not only was an exception from the other holy days, but actually stood in direct opposition to the existing theological point of view. This festival was celebrated on December 8th—nine months earlier than the sacred birthday—and its purpose was to commemorate Mary's conception.

In ecclesiological literature we find no certain information as to the time when the Eastern Church began to celebrate the conception of the Virgin. This festival, indeed, seems to have been confused by a number of

authors with the birthday,[12] which is all the more intelligible since, with regard to the earliest periods, the date of neither of the two festivals can be fixed.[13] Moreover, the question has been still more involved by reason of the fact that in a number of Eastern communities the Virgin's birthday was regarded as a holy day, on which homage was done, not only to Mary but also to Anna.[14] The greater the importance achieved by the Madonna cult, the more difficult it became to worship another saint on one and the same day. We may therefore imagine—it is advanced here only as an hypothesis—that out of solicitude for the rank of the two saintly women concerned, the Church reserved a special festival for the cult of the Virgin's mother, and chose for it the day on which—according to the Gospel of James—the barren woman had received the angel's annunciation, and embraced her husband in the glad knowledge that "she who was childless should bear a child." This festival—which, significantly enough, was at first called "S. *Anne's* Conception day"[15]—served only, like Mary's annunciation feast, to give the faithful an opportunity to express their gratitude for the miracle which God had permitted. To the Eastern Christians, who had not adopted Augustine's severe doctrine of original sin, there was no cause for misgiving in the fact that this miracle referred to a natural and earthly event.

Between the eighth and twelfth centuries (it is safer not to express ourselves more definitely) the feast of the Conception seems to have won a recognised place in the calendar of the Eastern Church.[16] The manner in which it was thence transferred to Europe has not hitherto been made clear. All that we know with certainty is that, as early as the first half of the

eleventh century, the feast was celebrated in two cloisters, at Winchester and in Canterbury Cathedral. During the twelfth century, Abbot Anselm, who was a nephew of the saint from Canterbury and who has often been confused with his great namesake, came forward as an ardent champion of the new festival, and his efforts were crowned with such success that a Council in London gave its official recognition to the day of the Conception.[17] It should be mentioned, however, that Anselm's endeavours were effectually assisted by no less a person than the Holy Virgin herself, who on several different occasions expressed herself in favour of the liturgical innovation.

Thus, as early as the preceding century, the pious Abbot Elsi had been saved from great peril at sea on promising to work for the institution of a festival of Mary's Conception. When the storm was raging at its worst, says the legend, and Elsi was sending up burning prayers to Mary, he saw walking over the waves towards the vessel a man with a reverend bearing and a pontifical decoration on his head. The stranger presented himself as a messenger from the Queen of Heaven, and commanded on her behalf that Elsi should every year recite in his church, on the Conception day, the office for the birthday feast, with this alteration, however, that the word "birth" should everywhere be changed into the word "conception."[18] According to other legends, a sinful monk and a clerk received from the Madonna forgiveness for their sins, upon condition that they should celebrate her Conception day and persuade others to do so.[19]

It was only natural that a festival which had received such recommendations should spread rapidly. Before long, Mary's Conception was celebrated in

certain churches in the north of France, and about 1128 the canons in Lyons resolved to keep December 8th as a holy day. This date is worthy of mention, because it marks one of the most important turning-points in the history of the doctrine of the Madonna.

As soon as the feast of the Conception had been introduced into the Gallic liturgy, it was necessarily commented upon by the scholastic theologians. Attempts were made, as had been done earlier in the case of the birthday feast, to work out the relation of the new festival to dogmatic principles. The first man to undertake such an attempt was S. Bernard, the same author who had deduced from the celebration of September 8th the doctrine of Mary's sanctification in the womb. On this occasion, however, this strict theologian was not inclined to allow the liturgy to give rise to any new doctrines. He was a devout worshipper of Mary's sanctity—that he had shown clearly in his writings; but he could not approve of homage being rendered to the Virgin at the very moment of her conception. To make this instant the object of commemoration was in his opinion to rebel against the Church's doctrine that every human being was conceived in sin. Mary's birth was pure and worthy to be held sacred —S. Bernard inculcated this dogma now as before— because the stain of original sin had been removed from her before she came into the world; but she could not have been sanctified before the conception, because she did not then exist, nor during the conception, because this was in itself sinful. The Conception festival, therefore, was in conflict with the fundamental doctrines of religion, and an enlightened Church, such as that at Lyons, ought not to have followed the example of certain ignorant and superstitious com-

munities by celebrating a feast of this kind. Such was the tenor of an indignant letter which S. Bernard sent to the canons at Lyons, after learning that they had begun to keep December 8th as a holy day of the Church.[20]

It seems as if S. Bernard thought he could kill the new festival by a *reductio ad absurdum*. He could not imagine, it seems, that people had taken into account all the dogmatic consequences to which the celebration of the Conception day might lead. It is indeed probable that many pious Christians were first aroused by Bernard's letter to the consciousness that they were setting themselves in conflict with the Church's doctrine of original sin every time they glorified the Madonna's conception; but when they were informed of this, they were by no means willing to give up the popular feast. Bernard had overlooked the fact that a cult-form may be reduced *ad absurdum*, but may flourish none the less. His plea led, therefore, to a repetition of the same phenomenon which can be observed during every stage of the history of the worship of Mary. The doctrine grew stronger under its vindication against those who attacked it, and the protests of the traditional dogmatism merely served to expose the old dogmas. If, it was argued, the celebration of the Conception festival implied that a conception could be regarded as sinless, then that of Mary was free from sin. Herewith the worship of God's tabernacle had reached its extreme consequence. The covering of the Highest was not even in its origin soiled by any earthly stain, and Mary was regarded as pure, not only from her birth, but from the first moment of her existence in the womb.

This idea, however, could not be advanced as a mere postulate. It must have a theological explana-

tion to bring it into harmony with the Church's point of view,[21] and a persistent fight had to be waged against the scholastic authors who stubbornly opposed the doctrine that an earthly being could at its very origin be freed from inherited sin. If it had not been possible to use the term "conception" in a twofold meaning, the new dogma would probably never have been recognised, for the idea that human generation had even in a single case been sinless could not be accepted by any orthodox and logical thinker. This was soon realised by the champions of the new doctrine, who were wise enough to transfer the discussion to a fresh field. This could be done all the more easily since mediaeval science established a distinction between two different conceptions: a first one, in which the foundation of the child's organism was laid; and a second, the so-called animation, in which the soul united itself with the embryo. In a sermon which circulated under S. Anselm's name, but which probably dates from the time after S. Bernard's letter to the canons at Lyons, a notable attempt was made to utilise this physiological distinction in support of the doctrine of the Madonna's absolute and original purity. The unknown author, like the majority of the unlearned, was disposed to worship both the natural and the spiritual conception of the Virgin, but he did not demand that his opponents should admit him to be right in both these respects. If, he said, the Church could not, without denying its theory of original sin, do homage to the first conception, nothing ought to prevent a recognition of the second moment's sanctity; and if it was once conceded that the physical element had been purified before or during the instant of animation, it followed that Mary had been sinless from the

very beginning of her existence as a human being, *i.e.* as a creature with a soul, and her spiritual conception was unstained.[22]

The assertions in this sermon correspond closely to the doctrine that was one day to be officially recognised, but, as we know, more than 700 years passed before the Church gave its sanction to the worship of the "Conceptio immaculata." Even in the milder form given by the theory of pseudo-Anselm, the dogma met with opposition from practically all the theologians of the Middle Ages. Alexander Hales, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas opposed both the festival of December 8th and the doctrines that could be deduced from it. It is easy to understand why the scholastic dogmatists could not be brought to make any concessions, even by the acutest investigations of what had taken place before, during, or after the animation of the embryo. For the doctrine of Atonement and Original Sin, which had prevailed in the Church ever since the time of Augustine, could not admit that any creature, with the exception of the Virgin-born Saviour, was pure from its very origin. What settled the question was, as has been pointed out by M. Herzog, the substitution of Anselm of Canterbury's purely judicial doctrine of offence and redemption for the physiological idea of original sin which had dominated Western theology for a thousand years.[23] The English Father was thus indirectly—even if in a different sense from what was meant when he was confused with his nephew or with the unknown pseudo-Anselm—the most powerful promoter of the belief in the Virgin's immaculate conception.

It was also through Anselm's disciple, Duns Scotus, that the new dogma was brought into harmony with

the scholastic system. As it was no longer considered —so Scotus unfolded his argument—that sin was something inevitably communicated at conception to every earthly creature, *i.e.* something transferred in a purely physical way from parents to children, but rather that original sin was inherent in the soul, it was not inconceivable that God had made an exception from the general rule in favour of His own Mother. Even with Mary redemption was necessary—here an objection of S. Thomas was confuted—but in her case it had not destroyed sin but prevented it. If the possibility of such a preventive atonement was once admitted, everything pointed to the probability of its having been granted to her who was and must be purer than any other earthly being.

The arguments of Scotus paved the way for the Conception dogma. Many of the learned theologians, indeed, continued to oppose it, and the Dominicans in particular made it a point of honour to uphold the doctrine of their master, S. Thomas; but Duns Scotus had his own mighty Order, the Franciscans, to back him. With them were associated all those pious believers who were indifferent to theological distinctions but all the more zealous in their worship of the Madonna. This party further gained powerful scientific support from the University of Paris, which had at an early date embraced the Franciscan point of view. The Popes soon found themselves compelled to recognise officially the feast of December 8th, and as soon as the liturgy had once been tolerated, it was all the easier to work for a corresponding dogma, against the validity of which unanswerable theological arguments could no longer be quoted. The earlier authors, who had opposed the Immaculate Conception, were carefully "edited" and interpreted, until

finally all their objections were explained away.[24] The hymns of the Eastern poets, in which Mary's pure and immaculate *motherhood* was glorified, were further taken as a proof of the Virgin's immaculate *conception*. All that had been said in regard to the "active conception" through which the Divine Child partook of human life, was applied to the "conceptio passiva" with which Mary's own life began. It could thus be said that it was a time-honoured doctrine which received its confirmation when in 1854 the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* made the Immaculate Conception a Roman Catholic dogma, the truth of which no one had a right to doubt. Mary's animation—thus explained the Church, following the thesis of the pseudo-Anselm—was immaculate and pure; but her body had been formed in a natural way and her human conception was not holy. Such is the import of the notable act by which Pius IX. contributed the final word in the seven-hundred-year-old discussion as to Mary's absolute and original purity.

The whole of the dogmatic development which has here been summarised as shortly as possible, falls properly within the sphere of theological history, but it is obvious that an idea, such as that of the Madonna's immaculate conception, must have been of eminent importance as regards aesthetic life. The notion of purity is not only a moral, but also and primarily an aesthetic notion, and it is the idea of a necessary connection between religious holiness and the aesthetic ideal of purity which ultimately compelled the Madonna worshippers to consider Mary as pure even in her conception. It is, therefore, to be expected that in the manifestations of poetry and art we shall find many reflections of the dogmatic ideas as to the Virgin's conception.

The succeeding investigations will fully confirm this supposition.

The theological definitions, indeed, could not directly influence aesthetic production, for they were far too abstract and intellectualist; but the popular fancies which germinated from the thought of an immaculate conception could all the better be utilised by art. Pious devotion expressed itself, not in dogmatic ideas, but in legends and pictures. The "simple-hearted and ignorant," who were scoffed at in S. Bernard's letter, would never have been able to justify their faith by scholastic arguments, but they could clothe it instead in a visible form which was to themselves poetically convincing. They corrected and completed the old traditions in order to bring them into harmony with the claims of religious and aesthetic feeling. In this work they were not troubled by any theological misgivings. Their ideas of atonement and original sin were far too indefinite to be any hindrance to imagination, and they did not worry about the distinction between the different moments of conception. It was not in physiological theories that they sought the explanation of the Virgin's original purity, but in the popular legend of the lives of her parents. In this legend new motives were introduced to explain the miraculous element in Mary's birth; and every trait was removed which could arouse the thought that even in the beginning any stain had clung to her who was to be a tabernacle of the Highest. Thus, as a parallel to the theological edifices, a narrative of Mary's conception was constructed in which everything was holy and pure. In this narrative Anna was the protagonist.

The ideas concerning Anna had, indeed, been intimately associated from the earliest times with the

thought of the immaculate conception. As has already been pointed out, it was Anna's festival which gave rise to the first formulations of the Conception dogma. In those districts where the agitation in favour of this dogma was most zealous, Anna also was worshipped with particular devotion;[25] and during those periods when the question of the Virgin's original purity occupied all men's minds, her mother also became the object of special attention on the part of the pious. The appreciation of Anna's purity rose and fell with the development of the Conception dogma. When the earlier explanations of the conception were prevalent, *i.e.* when even the "human conception" was regarded as immaculate, the Virgin's mother was accorded a considerable and, in some interpretations, even an absolute freedom from stain. Later, when scholastic theology formulated the dogma of the immaculate animation, Anna necessarily lost her exceptional position among earthly mothers, but she was still worshipped as sacred before others, because it was in her body that the miracle of the spiritual conception had taken place.

The simplest and most radical way of asserting the Madonna's original purity was to make her birth as miraculous as that of the Divine Child, *i.e.* to represent her also as "conceived by the Holy Ghost." In the Gospel of pseudo-Matthew it is even said that the angel declared to Joachim, "thy wife *has* [during thy absence] conceived a child"; and in a variation of this text, it is expressly said that Anna was "blessed by the Holy Ghost."[26] This idea was naturally useful to those authors who worked for the doctrine of the holy family's purity. When Johann Trithemius, in his *Tractatus de laudibus sanctissime Anne*, published in 1494, glorified the pious grandmother, he used

expressions which show that, in his opinion, Anna also was completely free from every earthly stain;[27] and the Neapolitan theologian, Imperiali, formulated dogmatically a theory which was authoritatively condemned in 1677, and according to which Anna, like Mary, had become a mother without having through childbirth ceased to be a virgin.[28]

This theory would undeniably have provided a simple solution of the problem of Mary's conception, but it is none the less easy to understand why the authorities of the Church refused to recognise it, and why it did not win any considerable number of adherents even among the ignorant. It is true that by applying to the mother all that the Bible told about the daughter, the future temple of God could be represented as pure from its foundation; but this merely pushed the difficulties one step back. Mary's organism, even if created in a supernatural way, must at any rate have received its material from her earthly mother, who had herself been borne in earthly love and who, therefore, had the stain of original sin; and behind her stood other mothers, who had all been conceived in sin. If it was desired to remove everything impure from Mary's being, the work of purification could not cease at any arbitrary point; to be effectual it must be continued through all earlier generations. There was some amount of reason in supposing *one* miracle through which a child had come into the world without an earthly father, but if two such miracles were once postulated, it would be necessary to assume many more. This had been pointed out by S. Bernard, probably with reference to theories such as Imperiali's, and in this case no one could refute his argument.

To avoid this long and monotonous series of similar perpetually-repeated supernatural births, extending

through all earlier generations, only one expedient was conceivable: the human genealogy could be broken off at a convenient point in order to attach the Virgin's race to a holy origin by a connection which was purer than natural generation. Such an expedient was too audacious for learned theologians, but popular imagination is not wont to hesitate in making use of this kind of supernaturalness. In the old treasury of tales, stories could be found of gods and men who had no earthly parents at all; and by combining these fables with the history of Mary, it should have been possible to free the Mother of God from every profaning contact with the fallen race. Indeed, in the old French legend of Anna and Fanuel, an attempt has been made to clear away all sinful ancestors from S. Anna's pedigree. Although this attempt has by no means been carried out consistently, it is nevertheless worthy of consideration as an example of the pious endeavour to rewrite the history of Mary in a romantic spirit.[29]

Curiously enough not even this legend could avoid making the mother of Mary's race a sinful being, but she is at any rate made as pure as an earthly creature ever was. She is the daughter of Abraham, twelve years old, a girl who was more beautiful than any other and white as a hawthorn-blossom, with sweet mouth and smiling eyes. The father of the race, again, is not a man at all, but a tree—and as such the most wonderful that ever grew on earth. For when the gates of Eden were closed, the legend tells us, God rooted up the tree of knowledge and planted it in Abraham's pleasure-garden, and He announced to Abraham that He Himself would one day be crucified on this tree, which had caused man's fall. Before that, however, a knight

should be born of the blossom, who would give life to the virgin in whose body God should take human form. So one day, when the young girl is wandering in her father's garden, she plucks one of the blossoms of the tree and smells it. No more is needed for the miracle to take place, for she is impregnated with the scent. Like so many other innocent women in the legends, she is accused and condemned by the people, who doubt her tale of the miraculous effects of the blossom; but when she is carried naked to the stake to be burned, the sticks are changed into roses and lilies which cover her body, and the flames become birds which send up sweet song.

The child who is borne by the girl grows up and becomes a mighty king, S. Fanuel. It is he who rules over the tree from Paradise, and with its fruits he heals disease and wounds among all who seek his help.[30] But he, like his mother before him, comes to experience the tree's miraculous fertilising power. For once, when he cut one of its fruits, he was incautious enough to wipe the knife on his leg. The sap impregnated his thigh, which swelled up and became larger and larger until, in "the fulness of time," the abscess opened and gave place to a female child—the child which later, after many adventures, was to be Joachim's wife and mother to Mary. At this point in the narrative we expect to meet with a new miracle, by which Anna should give life to the Holy Virgin by a miraculous conception; but just at the link by which Mary's birth should be connected with the earlier supernatural productions, the series of miracles is suddenly broken off, and the legend shows quite unmistakably that Mary is a real daughter of Joachim, born in his marriage with Anna.[31]

The author of *Le Romanz de S. Fanuel* obviously did not understand how much he might have

made of his subject. He has borrowed, perhaps from oriental legends, the motive of the fertilising scents and saps, and he has seen how well this motive harmonised with the idea of a being in whose life nothing impure might have place. None the less he has, in continuing his history, omitted to make use of the traditions which would have given his writing a logical consistency and a coherent idea; and, most peculiar of all, he has chosen for this continuation one of the most realistic variations of the tale of the marriage of Joachim and Anna. It is true that the earlier-cited text, according to which Mary was conceived by the Holy Ghost, forms an exception among the legends; but the general view of Mary's origin corresponds far better with the doctrines of an immaculate conception than the portrayal we find in the story of Fanuel. If the pious bards and artists usually represented Joachim as Mary's father, yet they have often interpreted his fatherhood in a spiritualised way. They have removed from the "human conception" everything that did not harmonise with the idea of something spotless and clean.

An example of how this idealising fiction could be carried out was to be found in some revisions of the narrative of the meeting of Joachim and Anna in the Gospel of James. In the oldest record of the Apocryphal legend, which was the foundation for our summary in the preceding chapter, it is stated merely that Anna waited for her husband at the door of their house, and there ran to meet him and fell upon his neck. But, according to the *Historia de nativitate Mariae*, Anna is warned by the announcing angel to betake herself to "the gate that is called the golden," there to meet her husband. She has a long time to wait for Joachim, however, and even becomes despondent before she sees

him approaching with his herds.[82] In the *Evangelium de nativitate Mariae*, again, the two reach the place simultaneously, and this happens in fulfilment of an express prophecy of the angel. "Make thyself ready," the angel warns Anna, "and go to Jerusalem; and when thou hast come to the gate which is called the golden—because it is gilded—this shall be to thee a sign that thy husband, for whose safety thou art troubled, is coming to meet thee. If this happens, then know that what I announced to thee shall without doubt be fulfilled." [83]

We see how the situation was made more significant, first by the scene being laid in a public place, near the splendid town gate, which throws its golden shimmer over the meeting of the pair; and, secondly, by the fact that Joachim and Anna, without any prearrangement, meet at the very place indicated by the angel. Such a meeting is in itself a little miracle which prepares the way for the other one foretold, that "she who was childless should bear a child." It can easily be understood that the pious, having once begun to worship Mary's conception, took a further step and made the greeting at the golden gate still more miraculous. Previously, when with devotion they remembered the aged woman who, full of glad hopes, ran to meet her husband, people thought of the promise given to Anna; for the promise they now substituted the fulfilment. By this alteration it was possible, without postulating any divine origin for Mary, to remove from her history all the markedly earthly and human moments which did not harmonise with the idea of her absolute purity, and the old legend hereby received a final remodelling by which it was brought into perfect agreement with the doctrine of the

Immaculate Conception. The Holy Virgin, it was said, was, indeed, born of Joachim and Anna, but she had not been produced in the same way as other human beings. Her spark of life was kindled in the golden moment when Anna met her husband at the gate of Jerusalem. She had been created, pure and immaculate, from the kiss of two affectionate parents.[34] The conception was simultaneous with the greeting, and that which the angel had announced was fulfilled at the moment when Anna fell upon Joachim's neck. In some religious poems the angel was even made expressly to prophesy this miracle also. Thus a glass painting at S. Gervais is explained by the following device :—

L'ange aussi à Anne espleurée
Nonça qu'à la porte dorée
Concepveroit de son bon espoux
Le fruict esleu pardessus tout.[35]

It is important to familiarise ourselves with this mystical view of the relationship between Joachim and Anna, if we wish to understand the illustrations of the Apocryphal narrative in pictorial art. As is well known, the Virgin's parents attracted to a high degree the attention of religious painters. The Gospel of James, indeed, embraces a wealth of poetical motives which in themselves must have exercised a powerful influence upon the pictorial imagination, but this circumstance cannot by itself explain why scenes from the pious tale were so often represented in painting. The Christian artists had not the choice of subjects in their own hands, as their work was decided for them by those who ordered it.[36] These, again, *i.e.* the churches, the monastic orders, and the individual pious patrons, were guided not so much by aesthetic as by dogmatic considerations. When they desired to have their walls decorated with pictures

from the history of S. Anna, this was chiefly due to the fact that her person was then the subject of learned speculation and pious devotion. In this respect Mary's parents profited by a state of affairs that was uniquely favourable. For just at the time when the Protoevangile had achieved a widespread popularity by reason of the theological discussion on the Conception doctrine, religious painting commenced its perhaps most important period. Thus it has happened that the legend of Joachim and Anna furnished the motive of some of the most significant works of the early Renaissance.

The Apocryphal stories about this pious couple had, indeed, been illustrated before: in the two notable manuscripts which contain the homilies of the monk Jacob; in some old paintings of the eighth century in the church of S. Paolo at Rome, which was destroyed by fire in 1823; in a Greek menology of the year 1025; and probably also in other compositions of which we no longer have knowledge.[37] It is only from the thirteenth century, however, that representations of the history of Joachim and Anna become common. The earliest in time, and the foremost in rank among these Renaissance works, is the series of pictures which Giotto painted on the walls of the Arena Chapel at Padua. No one has attained to the dramatic power, the firm and almost tangible visualisation, and the glory of colour with which he gave life to the legend. All the younger painters of Giotto's school, who portrayed the lives of Joachim and Anna, have merely followed in their master's steps, but there is much naïve ingenuity, and many entertaining features also, in their method of treating the subject. The narrative gains in intimate poetry as soon as it is taken up by those unknown German painters, "der Meister des Marienlebens" and his

anonymous disciples, and it finally develops into a monumental family romance when—with a greatness which can be compared with Giotto's, in spite of all the dissimilarity in method—it is illustrated by Albrecht Dürer in his engraved "Marienleben."

In the majority of these series, the same situations have been represented. Joachim's humiliation in the Temple, and the angel's appearance to him, are met with in nearly all the old Italian frescoes. On the other hand, Anna's Annunciation, Joachim's journey to the mountains and his offering at the hermit's hut, each of which occupies its section in Giotto's series in the Arena Chapel, have not appealed to many of the later painters. None of them, however, has omitted to represent the meeting at the golden gate. This motive has further been treated in numerous single pictures, and retained its popularity right up to the close of the sixteenth century. It is, indeed, easy to understand why the patrons of Church art considered the meeting of Anna and Joachim a suitable subject for religious painting. We should do these pious and serious men a wrong if we believed that they allowed themselves to be guided by merely aesthetic considerations. The artists might value the purely pictorial possibilities of their work, but their patrons thought first of its theological import. For them it mattered little that all the poetry of ancient legend had been compressed into that chapter which describes Joachim's return with herds and herdsmen following, and Anna's waiting for him surrounded by her serving-women, and the affectionate greeting of the two amidst the white woolly creatures. They did not understand that James's narrative here takes on the tone of an oriental pastoral, which leads the thought to the old love-scene where Isaac, out in the fields, found

his Rebecca in the midst of camels and sheep. What to them was most important of all, and what made the motive suitable for Church decoration, was that the meeting at the golden gate was considered as an illustration of the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception.[38] What was portrayed was not an ordinary family scene, but a miracle by which the purest of all living beings was produced. In some cases it even happened that the dogmatic significance of the paintings was expressly emphasised by providing them with an inscription: *Taliter concepta est beata Maria.*[39] In other cases the artists themselves took care that the deeper meaning of their compositions should be understood.

Thus it appears indubitable that it was in order to direct attention to the miraculous conception that some painters represented an angel bending down from heaven, and with his hands pressing Anna's and Joachim's heads together. Such divine assistance was more than superfluous, had it been only an ordinary caress that was represented; but we can easily understand why an angel should guide the couple to that kiss which gave life to Mary. By this heavenly apparition, therefore, the pious must have been reminded of the Virgin's stainless origin when they looked at the Giottesque frescoes in the cloisters of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, or when they stood before Vivarini's picture in Santa Maria Formosa at Venice. Still more important in its religious symbolism is a little picture in the University galleries at Oxford, in which behind the figures of Joachim and Anna—with a little angel floating over their heads—we see a slight and almost incorporeal female figure clad in white: the image of the virgin, say the interpreters, who was to be born of the couple's embrace.[40]

It is improbable that the painters, even when they

neglected to suggest the great miracle by such outer means, were unconscious of the fact that they had to represent something more than an ordinary genre motive. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that the mystical meaning of the theme influenced them to endow their compositions with that loftiness which continually marks the pictures of the meeting at the golden gate. Whether Joachim takes his wife under the chin, as is the case on the seal of the French brothers of the conceptions,[41] or only presses her hands, as in Benvenuto di Giovanni's predella in the Accademia at Siena, or grasps her by the elbows or shoulders, as in Giovanni da Milano's and Taddeo Gaddi's compositions in Sta. Croce at Florence, or bends forward towards her in an embrace as in Carpaccio's picture at Venice, or kisses her and places his cheek against hers as in Giotto's fresco at Padua,—we imagine that we see how the artists tried to render a caress which was light and pure, but which by reason of the unique miracle was as powerful in its effects as the most elementary expressions of earthly love.

That it was theological dogma which gave their popularity to the pictures of Joachim and Anna's meeting, also appears clearly from the fact that from the close of the sixteenth century these pictures become more and more rare. As has already been mentioned, Mary's physical conception was then no longer looked upon as holy, but the greatest weight was laid instead upon the purity of her animation. The old and popular view, indeed, prevailed in art a considerable time after it had been abandoned in learned discussions; but it proved impossible in the long run to allow the painters to represent an idea which was no longer recognised by

dogmatic speculation. The orthodox authors of the counter-Reformation protested with indignation, therefore, against the scene at the golden gate being made a motive for devotional pictures. When Mary's immaculate conception was to be illustrated, the embrace of her parents ought not, they said—and it is still said to-day—to be represented, and only Mary herself, who alone partook of miraculous purification, should be portrayed. Mary who tramples upon the serpent's head, or Mary who is carried by the moon or surrounded by the sun, thus became the symbols, none too clear or enlightening, by which the theological dogma was made visible.[42] Anna and Joachim could no longer be brought into direct connection with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, because their relationship was viewed as one of marriage, in the proper meaning of the word. As such it had, indeed, been described in many of the old legends and poems.

If accordingly it was no longer proper to see a miracle in the affectionate greeting of the couple, yet the marriage of which the Virgin was the issue might still be regarded as purer than any other earthly connection. Piety solicited such an interpretation, and the legends lent support to it. Here, indeed, was the place to employ that argument which has been cursorily touched upon in the beginning of this chapter. In the case of the old couple who had become parents by a deviation from the ordinary course of nature, no earthly passion could be supposed. Thus Mary's purity appeared to be foreshadowed, if not actually determined, by the passionless relations of Joachim and Anna.

The most notable expression of this idea dates from the time when the Conception doctrine had not yet won any generally accepted recognition. In her visions,

S. Birgitta makes the Holy Virgin explain how she had been conceived without sin. The manner in which the Swedish woman, who had herself been wife and mother, understood the union of the pious couple is so characteristic that her words deserve to be given without abridgment: "And when it had been announced to them by the angels that they should give life to the Virgin from whom the health of the world should come, rather would they have died than unite in carnal love. For lust was dead within them. And, indeed, I tell you that they united out of pious love and in obedience to the words of the angels, not from any lust but against their own will in godly submission." [43]

S. Birgitta was not alone in asserting that Mary's parents obeyed the angel against their will. According to some later authors, Joachim and Anna were so taken up by their love of God that they could not feel any earthly love. By one of those bold similes which occur so frequently in religious literature, the ecstasy of their faith is compared with Noah's intoxication, which made him unconscious of the fact that he was embracing his daughters.[44] More beautifully, however, and less absurdly, the relationship is described by a prophetess of modern times, Anna Catharina Emmerich, who in one of her visions had a revelation of how "die heilige Jungfrau sei in vollkommener Lauterkeit und heiligem Gehorsam von ihren Eltern erzeugt worden, welche sodann mit steter Enthaltung in höchster Andacht und Gottesfurcht zusammengelebt hätten." [45]

As we see, to those who did not wish to regard her as a virgin, Anna became an ideal type of the virtuous wife and mother. Her marriage, it was said, was more meritorious than virginity; for when she who would rather have died than live in earthly love, obeyed the

angel's command, she gave an example of humble dutifulness. S. Birgitta had learnt from the Mother of God herself to venerate this sacrifice of Anna's. "If," so Mary told her in a vision concerning her parents' marriage, "if any one wished to fast, and was ordered by his superior to eat, and out of obedience ate against his will—such eating would be more praiseworthy than fasting."[46] Thus Anna was a right-minded Christian matron, who followed the commands of nature but obeyed them only as a duty; and to popular imagination she actually appeared as a martyr to this duty. For it seems, indeed, as if her worshippers considered her subserviency so praiseworthy that they could not be content with one example of it. As if further to emphasise her obedience, legends were written telling how she submitted to the constraint of several new marriages after becoming Joachim's widow.[47] These legends, however, were calculated to appeal to pious minds also in another respect, for if it were supposed that Mary's mother founded several families, a certain order could be brought into the genealogy of the holy house. The half-brothers and sisters of the Madonna—by reason of Joachim's great age, it was difficult to suppose that he could have been the father of many children—might have produced cousins to Jesus; and, according to the time-honoured view, there was justification for supposing that the Bible referred to cousins, when it spoke of those "brothers of our Lord," who, as has already been mentioned, caused the learned so much misgiving. Therefore, James the elder and John, together with Simeon, Judah, Joseph and James the younger, were made out to be grandsons of S. Anna. Their mothers, according to the legend, were two Marys, one of whom married Zebedeus, and the other Alpheus. The latter's

wife was the daughter of Anna and Cleophas, and Zebedeus's wife was the daughter of Anna by her last husband, who bore the name, rather unusual for a man, of Salome. On behalf of this peculiar genealogy, with its three daughters of one mother, all bearing the same name, naturally no support could be cited either in literature or in early tradition, but none the less there were serious Churchmen who zealously defended the fabulous pedigree. The theologians of the Sorbonne even declared it a heresy to doubt the doctrine of "Anna trinuba et tripara." Anna herself, it was said, had, in 1406, introduced in a vision all her numerous offspring to her worshipper, S. Colette, *i.e.* the Belgic nun Beata Coleta Boilet.[48]

After it had thus been proved that Jesus had grown up in a circle of numerous relations, religious painting began to depict the holy family in its entirety, from Anna, with her three husbands, down to James the younger. German art particularly offers many examples of such "Sippenbilder."[49] They are group portraits, in which the pious cousinship has been collected in a great family gathering. The children, as is usual in such compositions, have their place on the floor, while their mothers, with the tenderest infants on their laps, sit in a row on a long bench and gravely watch the games of the growing generation. Behind the seats, the fathers are grouped in courteous retirement. In the very midst, beside her daughter and her divine grandchild, Anna, the mother of the house, the prolific German matron, is enthroned. We imagine we are looking at a worthy burgher family which has had its portrait taken *en groupe*, for the figures are obviously painted from models, and the dresses and furniture are rendered with the photographic faithfulness typical of old German art.

The fact that the compositions illustrate the sacred story might easily be overlooked, were it not for the quiet and devotional expression on the faces of the uncles and aunts. There is, however, a little detail which, gives the attentive observer an indication of the subject of the pictures, for on the children's playthings a prophecy of the fate they are to experience can be deciphered. They amuse themselves indeed, according to the manner of their age, with rattles and hobby-horses and soap-bubbles, but at the same time they are occupied by more serious things. James the elder, the patron saint of all pilgrims, leans upon the staff which, according to mediaeval legends, was to accompany him on his long journeys. James the younger is busy with the club which would one day kill him; and Simeon Zelotes fingers the saw with which his body was to be cloven, as one cleaves a board. Thus by means of their symbolical attributes the pictures tell of the sacrifices which the children were to make for their great kinsman, and of the way in which Anna's family, by suffering, was to bear witness to the divinity of Mary's Child.[50]

It was, however, only during a short time that the pictures of the "heilige Sippe" enjoyed their popularity. After the first decades of the sixteenth century, the representations of the Holy Family become more and more rare. Theological authors now expressed their disapproval of Anna's numerous progeny being depicted in religious paintings. The subject was no longer fashionable, because the dogmatists had once more altered their views of Anna's personality. The leading authorities gave their support to those authors who saw something painful in the idea that the Virgin's mother had abandoned her widowhood. In spite of the Sorbonne and the visions of Coleta, the belief in Anna's later

marriages was completely abandoned, and it was now sought to show that the expressions in the Bible in regard to Mary's sisters and brothers did not in any way conflict with the view that Anna had been married only once.[51]

The notion of the degree of Anna's purity has, it seems, undergone many changes, but her sanctity has not been dependent upon the varying theories as to the conception. Whether Anna was regarded as a virgin, who had been overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, or as a mother whose only child had been produced by a kiss, or as an honourable wife, who in earthly marriage had given descendants to as many as three different men, she was always worshipped as one of the very foremost among the Church's saints. Her cult increased continuously during the later Middle Ages, and she was honoured more universally than at any other time just before the Reformation, *i.e.* at the very period when the legends as to her trinubium enjoyed their greatest popularity. It was only natural, further, that every gain for the doctrine of the Madonna's greatness should call forth an increased veneration for her mother. Independently of what was thought of Anna's own history, the mere fact that the purest being had been conceived, or rather animated in her womb, must have conferred on Anna a kind of secondary sanctity.

In this respect, too, the pious applied the same concrete reasoning that has left its mark upon all Catholic symbolism. In the Old Testament descriptions of how God's Temple was built out of costly and pure materials (1 Chronicles xxix.), men saw references to Mary, who was formed without spot and grew up without being even for a moment defiled by sin.[52] And if Mary was a Temple of God, because she had borne

the Highest in her womb, so also Anna's body was a holy room, because in it the Virgin's shape had been formed. She, too, was a shrine, in which precious contents had been enclosed, and in her person, too, the shell was sanctified by the kernel. We have only to read how Anna is glorified in the *Jungfru Marie örtagård*:[53] "O how great is the praise of the mother Anna, for she is God the Father's most glorious treasure-chamber, in which He concealed the purest and most perfect gold of His divinity, which is the greatest treasure of all treasures."

This naïve idea has also been expressed in pictures, for there are works designed to illustrate the Immaculate Conception, which represent S. Anna in such a way that we can distinguish in her body a little embryo with hands pressed together, and surrounded by a glory. In a French "livre d'heures" of 1510, the artist has even gone so far as to place Mary, bearing the Christ child at her breast, in Anna's open womb.[54] To-day, indeed, religious prudishness seeks to prevent such pictures being painted and exhibited in churches,[55] but there is no doubt that the pious often thought of S. Anna as a casket for Mary. She was the covering of the covering, and was less pure than her daughter, for she stood a step farther away from the holy contents; but it was in any case her body which provided the material for God's Temple. Therefore it was a natural idea that led to her being constituted the patron saint of the furniture-makers. Just as these used their best skill in manufacturing the Church cabinets in which the eucharistic God was kept, so Anna in her womb had produced the chamber for the God incarnated in human form.[56] We see how the shrine symbolism perpetually pervades the religious view.

The holiest of all contents conveys its holiness to the body in which it has been enshrined, and accordingly Mary's body becomes in its turn a sacred content, which confers distinction upon its covering. In the doctrine of her relationship to Anna, the same thoughts are repeated which are associated with the relationship between the Saviour and His mother. Thus Anna becomes a kind of Madonna of the second order, to whom a number of the Holy Virgin's functions are transferred. Both in art and theology many curious results are to be found of this reduplication of the Madonna concept.

The thought has received its most noteworthy expression in those devotional pictures which in Italian art are called "S. Anna metterza," and in Germany "Anna selbdritt." In these the two mothers have been represented together with the Holy Child. In a number of cases Anna and Mary are placed side by side, and the infant Jesus reaches from the Virgin's bosom towards His grandmother;[57] but in other pictures Anna sits behind her daughter on a higher seat, so that the composition culminates in the aged woman's venerable form. The second shrine stands outside the first, in an arrangement which brings to mind the boxes in an oriental box-game. The eyes of the pious spectator can turn from the Divine Child to her who bore and gave birth to Him, and afterwards to the being in whose womb His mother was produced. As genealogical illustrations these pictures are of insurpassable clearness; from the theological point of view they show unmistakably the gradation in the relationship of the holy person to the Highest, and by their way of placing the figures they render the subordination of daughter to mother evident to the beholder.

In this last respect, however, the compositions here described have given rise to criticism. It is not, it has been said, consonant with true piety that she who bore only a human being should receive a higher place than the Mother of God. On the other hand, Anna could not be introduced between the Child and the Virgin, and the younger woman could not be raised above the older. It is not inconceivable, as Mrs. Jameson supposed, that it was in order to solve this involved question of rank that recourse was had to the expedient of letting Mary, with Jesus, sit upon Anna's knee.[58] Such an arrangement—which gave rise to many grotesque pictures, but was also the basis for that miracle of grace and harmonious grouping created by Leonardo in his S. Anna—faithfully expresses the theological view of the Virgin's mother. Anna bears Mary, whose figure is often dwarfed to the proportions of a little girl, in the same way that Mary bears Jesus; and just as it is through Anna that the Divine Child has His outermost connection with the world around, so it is in many cases through her person that suppliants first address themselves to the Highest. When Madonna worship reached its culmination, it might happen that the Virgin was regarded as too lofty for people to dare to make a direct appeal to her. In such cases they sought in Anna a mediator between mankind and the Madonna, and the aged woman filled the same rôle in relation to her daughter as did the latter in relation to Jesus.[59] It should be mentioned, however, that the doctrine of Anna's work of intercession never won general recognition in the Church. It did not serve any real need, because for the majority of her worshippers Mary retained so much humanity that they could appeal to her with good courage in all their troubles; but this

did not prevent Anna from continuing to be one of the saints most frequently invoked, and men from appealing to the Highest in many cases through her mediation.[60]

Thus, just as Anna took over a share of Mary's influence, so also she has borrowed many of the characteristics that were especially distinctive of her daughter. In the legends of Anna's life, which were disseminated among the faithful during the fifteenth century, reflections of the old narratives of Mary's childhood can clearly be traced. Anna, too, is described as a pure and shy young girl, who grows up under the protection of her pious mother Emerentia, and she, too, even during her early years, is a model for all Christian women. What is related in these old and secondary stories is in itself of considerable interest, but it need not occupy us in this connection. For all that has been written about Anna's virtues is only a pale reflection of the poetry with which the faithful have surrounded the figure of Mary. It is Anna's rôle to serve as a preparation for those miracles which the world was to see in Mary's person and fortunes. About this preparation enough has now been said, and it is time to pass over to the story of her in whom all "types" and "examples" were to find their fulfilment.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHILDHOOD OF MARY

Maria, du jetzt ein Kindlein bist,
Das sauget der heiligen Mutter Brüst,
Die Kinder gern alles verschenken,
Drum wollest auch meiner gedenken.
Mein Grobheit, die wollest verzeihen,
Viel Gnade dafür mir verleihen.

PROCOPIUS, *Mariale festivale*
(*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*).

THE old Gospel of James is, as has already been pointed out, a didactic writing, which to its purpose falls mainly within the sphere of dogmatic polemics and ascetic tracts. We can clearly, and unfortunately often only too clearly, observe the intention that guided the author when he composed his mosaic of Biblical texts and Eastern legends It is difficult to attribute to him any striving after aesthetic effect, at any rate as a conscious factor, and whatever literary merits his work possesses are derived in many cases from his models rather than from his own imagination. To a great extent the same judgment applies to the majority of the later revisions of the Apocryphal gospel, in which the theological and moralising element generally plays a more important part than the narrative pure and simple. It would, however, be none the less more than unfair to pronounce these devotional writings destitute of all independent merit and all aesthetic attraction.

However strictly the authors might be occupied by what they had to prove and by what they had to hold up as examples to their readers, they could not help being influenced by their subject. They tell their story with an evident and contagious interest, and we see that they themselves were carried away by the beautiful legend. There are few of them who do not abandon the didactic attitude when they have to describe the youthful Virgin's grace and the charm of her being. It seems as if the Patristic seriousness was softened and the severe faces lit up by the smiles with which old people regard the manifestations of young life. However severe an ascetic may have been, he could not resist the magic with which the innocence of childhood works its enchantment.

It was, moreover, a part of the duty of pious literature to meditate upon the Holy Virgin's childhood. Ascetic pedagogy began with the earliest years of life, and even at her tenderest age Mary must stand as a model for all pious women. The more the demands of monastic life were increased, the greater became the need of a moral "example" in which all these demands were fulfilled. That suggestion of priggishness which already makes itself felt in the Protoevangile's description of Anna's daughter, becomes still more accentuated in the later versions. If in the oldest legend Mary was a kind of female counterpart to the Jewish Nazarite, in mediaeval writings and songs she became a little nun who instinctively adopted all the rules of the cloister, even before they had been formulated.

The second predominant quality in the Mary type of the Protoevangile—her absolute purity—was also more and more clearly set forth by the mediaeval writers. Just as in the Mass-ceremony the ritual cathartic was

developed at the same time as the idea of the Sacrament's identity with the Highest was worked out, so too the idea of the Madonna's absolute spotlessness necessarily acquired increased importance when men had accustomed themselves to see God even in the child she bore and gave birth to. Moreover, there came another influence which caused men to work with unwearying zeal for the idealisation of Mary. If in handling the altar implements it was necessary to ward off all profanation and defilement threatening the Holy of holies, it was a still more important and far more difficult duty to preserve the purity of the living tabernacle. For the human existence in which God and His mother had been planted was in the Christian view more soiled than anything else. At each step, therefore, of the Madonna's development, it must be specially shown how she was unlike all other women, and how she alone was raised above the unclean race. Religious imagination had to create an ideal picture, which separated itself in all its characteristics from concrete reality.

What this work implies we understand clearly, if we acquaint ourselves with the literature in which mediaeval asceticism's hatred of life is expressed. Poems, sermons, and theological treatises unanimously assert how little earthly things merit appreciation. It is not necessary, however, to examine these writings separately, since all that has been said in different places as to the misery of life is insurpassably summarised in a little book which is typical of the gloomy world-philosophy of the Middle Ages: Innocent III.'s *De contemptu mundi.* This book probably represents the most pessimistic estimate of existence that has ever been made. No one has dared to expose the animal element in human existence so unmercifully as the old

Pope. That which appears to the "children of the world" as the mystery of life is investigated by the ecclesiastical critic of life with a closeness that is terrible in its brutal realism. Love, birth, and death are processes that are each in turn equally loathsome. The blossoming veil, behind which the machinery of life is working, cannot mislead one who is at war with life, and who will not see in it anything but its grossest basic phenomena. Thus Innocent's looks do not rest on the rosiness of cheeks, or the roundness of arms, or the freshness of the skin, but only upon what is hidden behind the fair surface; and his outlook upon life has not even the greatness of gloom. He does not describe the skeleton, the dead man which we all bear within us, and which becomes more and more prominent as its clothing is worn away from the carcase; but he describes with bitter satisfaction that which is more horrible than the skeleton, because it is alive: all the forges for burning and decomposition which work under the covering of the fair exterior. Man is for him, and for all mediaeval moralists, a being who comes into the world in shame and impurity, who lives amid contagion and dirt, and who becomes only more repulsive as he grows older. Not only is he a polluted vessel for disgusting contents, but he also affords shelter on his body for other unclean creatures, for vermin and parasites, the kinds and varieties of which are described by Innocent with a completeness which probably exhausted mediaeval zoological science.[1]

Such was, according to the ascetic view, the race with which the Highest had to unite Himself, and such is the life He had to experience. In contrast to this idea, so horrible in its realism, had to be described the woman in whose body God could take up His abode

without being defiled. It was impossible to emphasise Mary's purity without a constant reference to that uncleanliness against which her figure stood out in sharply-defined contours. Even earliest childhood, which in our view is so innocent, was in Church theory defiled by all the lowness of earthly life. Therefore, to convince people of the spotlessness of the growing child, it was necessary to dwell upon the most unimportant details of her life, and this very striving after the greatest possible refinement led to an indiscretion in the portraiture which often appears positively outrageous. The pious authors felt secure in the consciousness that the Madonna saw the good-will that guided their descriptions, and probably they have often proffered that excuse which one feels the need of repeating, both on their behalf and one's own, before beginning an account of the treatment of Mary's life in mediaeval literature: *Mein Grobheit, die wollest verzeihen.*

It is only in a critical analysis, however, that the different elements in the pious ideas as to the infant Mary can be distinguished from one another. In the poems and legends themselves the childlike grace, the virtues and the purity, fuse into a poetic figure as harmonious as any creation of the free artistic imagination; and this figure retains its features so unchanged that all the earlier and later versions may be regarded as variations of the same legend.[2] Again, the illustrations of pictorial art, as a rule, follow the narrative so closely that they can without difficulty be treated together with the poetical descriptions.

It is also from pictorial representations that we have to start in our review of the Virgin's life. For unlike the birth of Jesus, the first scene in Mary's life has not served as the motive for any detailed literary narratives.

From the beginning of the seventh century, indeed, a yearly festival was celebrated in Europe in memory of Mary's birth, with which event, in the view of the Church, the great work of Atonement commenced.[3] Sermons and hymns expressed the joy of the community over the birth of that being who in her virtues surpassed all things created. Yet in all that was said and sung on these occasions, men confined themselves to some rhetorical declamations about the Madonna's greatness. The Apocryphal gospels devoted only a very short space to Anna's child-birth; and the later writers of legends do not appear to have found any occasion to embellish this narrative with any new and noteworthy details.

Quite different was the case with the pictorial arts. Painters and sculptors knew well how to avail themselves of the profitable subject presented to them by Anna's child-bed. Indeed, the birth of the Virgin is a motive frequently treated in Christian art. It won its popularity during the period when the Madonna dogmas occupied all men's minds, *i.e.* during the early Renaissance, but the subject had been illustrated long before. The oldest known representations are to be found in a Greek menology of the year 1025, and in the remarkable manuscripts containing the homilies of the monk James, which are likewise thought to date from the eleventh century.[4] The method of treatment naturally varies at different times and places: from the familiar *genre* of the German painters to the monumental simplicity of Giotto and his pupils, and to the ceremonial and pompous style of Ghirlandajo's frescoes. In spite of their differences, however, all these compositions have certain elements in common. The mother is usually represented lying in her bed, while some serving-women

or friends converse with her, and the nurses prepare a bath for the new-born child.[5] In these respects the disposition is quite complete in the Greek menology, and it is even possible that, as Venturi asserts, the composition in this manuscript is derived from still older models, *i.e.* from antique reliefs representing the birth of a child. The attendant women by Anna's bed would correspond, according to this interpretation, to the three Parcae, and the nurse at the bath would be the successor of the slave who, in heathen art-works, takes care of the children of gods and heroes.[6]

Whatever we may think of such a theory, it is certainly remarkable that artists so often represented Mary's bath in spite of the fact that it is not mentioned in literature. Grimouard de S. Laurent has even expressed a strong disapproval of this detail in the compositions, and if we try to place ourselves at the Catholic point of view, we can quite understand his pious indignation. The bath and the washing implements are, indeed, a superfluous, not to say an unwarranted, apparatus in Anna's sick-room. Even if the authors did not definitely express themselves as to the course of events at the Virgin's birth, yet it is clear, from all they tell us of Mary, that there cannot have been any need to purify that being who, even in the womb, had been free from every stain.[7] Besides, it had been revealed to S. Birgitta by the Saviour Himself, that His mother at her birth was "so fair that no pollution was in her."[8] The only motive which could be assigned for the unnecessary purification would be that on this occasion also, as so frequently during Mary's later life, there was a deliberate intention to disguise her special position in creation, by allowing her to become the object of the same treatment as other children of men. But even such a measure of

precaution must have been superfluous, for the absolute purity of the Virgin had been recognised by her enemies from the very first moment. Thus in the continuation of the revelation just referred to, S. Birgitta tells how the devils understood who it was that had been born: "They looked so sorrowful and felt so unhappy that it was as if a voice had cried from hell, saying, 'A virgin is born who is so virtuous that she surpasses all that is created in the kingdoms of heaven and of earth.'"[9]

It cannot have been long before Mary's miraculous qualities were revealed to others than the devils. All the references to the first years of the Virgin, which are to be found in the endless and highly-detailed descriptions of the epic poems of Mary, testify clearly that she was not an ordinary suckling. We are told in the *Vita Beate Virginis Marie et Salvatoris Nostri rhythmica* (from the thirteenth century) that her parents were never disturbed in their rest by her crying or weeping, and that her dressing never gave any trouble to her nurses, for she was cleaner than could be believed—"multo plus quam credi possit." Walther von Rheinau—who during the fourteenth century carried out with praiseworthy patience a poetic rendering into German of the Latin poem—expressly asserts that no stains, "gross noch klein," were ever seen upon her clothes, either when she was undressed to be put to bed or when she was lifted up out of the cradle.[10] Not only was she clean in her habits, but she was also admirable in the whole of her behaviour. She was nourished at her mother's breast, for, says Brother Philip, Anna was in this respect also a pattern which all German mothers ought to imitate;[11] but Mary took her food without greediness and her meals were never too rich.[12] Thus, even when

she was in long clothes, she knew how to exercise the virtue of moderation.

When she had learnt to talk Mary was never guilty of any childish and wearisome prattle, but gave intelligent and kindly answers whenever spoken to, and never uttered an evil word about anybody.[13] She avoided noisy companions, like a child who understands how to preserve its dignity. She must also have taken great care of her little person, for it is specially stated that her hands were white and her nails clean.[14] But with all her eminent and intelligent precocity, she was not one of those little pedants who have a depressing effect on those around them. It is true that she laughed seldom, but whenever she smiled, "the expression of her mouth was accompanied so charmingly by that of her eyes, that it was a joy to see her." [15] Her sympathy made it easy for her to be sorrowful with the sorrowful, but she could also be glad with the glad.[16] And the mere sight of her awoke gladness, for her countenance shone—so brightly, says Gautier de Coincy, that one could scarcely endure to see it.[17] It was, to quote the old Swedish legend, as white as snow, and so luminous that one could light a candle from it.[18]

When the poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries thus represented Mary as a model for all good children, they introduced into their description many features from the ethical ideas of their own time. What is essential in these poems, however, is based on an ancient tradition founded by the Church Fathers of the first centuries. Thus in his treatises on virginity, Ambrosius describes in detail the exemplary habits of the holy child.[19] He asserts that Mary was sparing in her food, but lavish in pious works, and that when at any time she had been exhausted by fasting,

she took nourishment only in order to preserve her life, but not to satisfy her hunger. She never slept, he says, more than was necessary, and while her body rested, her soul was at work, repeating during sleep what she had read, or preparing to continue, as soon as her sleep was broken, the occupation commenced during her waking hours.[20] She never left home except to go to church; she worked alone and hidden in her room; and she never walked in the streets without companionship. These, and many other proofs of Mary's virtuous nature, are brought forward by Ambrosius to encourage his feminine readers to imitation. "May, therefore, Mary's virgin life," he expressly says, "be described for you in a picture which like a mirror reflects the ideal of chastity and the essence of virtue. May you draw from this picture examples for your own life, which show you in a perfect model what you have to correct in yourselves, what you have to avoid, and what you have to strive after.

"The first thing you should zealously appropriate is the nobility of your model. What is nobler than God's Mother, what is more resplendent than she who was chosen out by Heaven's resplendent King? What is more chaste than she who bore a child without physical conception? How can I tell of all her other virtues? She was a virgin—not only in her body but also in her soul—who did not let any stain soil her pure heart: humble in mind, serious in her words, intelligent in her thoughts, slow to talk and swift to learn; building her hope, not upon uncertain riches, but upon the prayers of the poor; zealous in her work, reverent in her utterances, and seeking the principles of action not from men, but from God. She injured no one, wished all well, was reverent towards all her elders, and was not

envious of those of her own age; she avoided quarrels, sought after reason, and loved virtue. When, indeed, did she hurt her parents even by a look, when had she a different opinion from her relations, when did she humiliate an inferior, ridicule a weaker, or avoid one who sought her help?—she who sought only such society where innocence never need blush and where respect was never set aside. Never was a severe expression seen on her face, never anything disrespectful in her bearing, never were her gestures other than comely; her walk other than dignified, nor her voice other than gentle. And thus the shape and movements of her body pictured forth the purity of her soul. For"—here the pious Father addresses a direct exhortation to his female readers—"in a beautiful house one ought to meet beauty even in the ante-chamber, and at our first entrance we ought to be assured that nothing soiled dwells in the inner apartments, but that the soul's loveliness, unhampered by all physical bonds, can shine forth like the light from a lantern."

In spite of all his asceticism, Ambrosius, as we see, knew well how to appreciate the significance of external beauty. In this respect his description corresponds with the view of the Virgin held by all the early Christian and mediaeval authors. The worshippers of the Madonna have always regarded her body as a clear lantern from which the purity of the soul shines forth unhindered. In voluminous descriptions and with extensive repetitions, they have set forth how the Virgin was, even physically, more admirable than any one else, but it is seldom that these lists of Mary's perfections succeed in waking any living image in the reader's mind. In their anxiety not to pass over a single feature, the pious authors have made inventories of the elements of her

beauty, instead of giving a pictorial description of what theologians call the "union of graces in the Madonna's person." We learn, to mention some striking examples, that Mary's eyebrows were neither too long nor too short, and extended beautifully over the eyes; that her teeth were white and even, without cavities or stains, and shining like ivory; that her nose was straight and her nostrils (of course Mary's childhood is here described) were never in need of wiping; that her voice was pleasant and her breath "sweetly aromatic" —but we do not see before us the being of whose beauty we are to be convinced.[21]

The only thing we retain of the extensive descriptions, as, for example, in the *Vita rhythmica* and in Walther von Rheinau's German paraphrase of this poem, is an impression of Mary's movements. She walked, it is said, with an upright bearing, but her head was always a little bent, as befits a modest virgin, who should not hold her neck too straight; and all her behaviour, her walk and her gestures, were decent, courteous, and modest.[22] In this humbleness of Mary lay undoubtedly, according to the Catholic view, the foremost cause of her possession of that living and compelling beauty, whose name, *gratia*, at once signifies grace and charm. It was by her humbleness, more than aught else, that she drew the Highest to take up His abode in her body.[23] For what He first looked to was not mere physical beauty—"non treccia d' oro, non d' occhi vaghezza," as Boccaccio sings in his sonnet to the Madonna; but the modesty of a humble mind:—

> Ma l' umiltade tua, la qual fu tanta,
> Che potè romper ogni antico sdegno
> Tra Dio e noi.

By the same qualities Mary won the love of men, when

she went out with bent head and with neck bowed in graceful modesty. In the mediaeval ideal of womanhood, grace and modesty were indissolubly united, and the higher the rank of a woman, the greater was the value set upon her modesty. Thus it is said in the old *Schacktafvelslek* concerning the modesty of queens:[24]—

> Then som är höwisk j sina hoga
> aff blyghet skal hennes enne loga,
> aff alla kropsins däglikhet
> mest tha skiner blyglikhet.

"She who is courteous in her mind, with shyness shall her face be shining; of all the beauties of the body, none is more shining than shyness."

In the case of Mary, however, this charming modesty must have been coupled with a quiet and dignified security, in a union giving personal distinction to her entire being. It was, indeed, by an act of childish courage that she aroused admiration when she was brought to the Temple, and on this occasion her invincible charm was for the first time revealed to "all the people." Accordingly both art and poetry have found, from a purely aesthetic standpoint, an invaluable motive in the story of the Virgin's visit to the Temple.

In the Eastern Church a festival had been instituted during the ninth century, perhaps even during the eighth century, to commemorate Mary's "presentation." In Europe, indeed, this festival has not achieved any general popularity, but in many places it has been celebrated with pious ardour, and efforts are still being made to win a wider recognition for it.[25] To an outsider it may seem as if the occasion were too unimportant to give rise to any special Church ceremonies, but such a judgment disregards the ability of Catholic authors to introduce a deep meaning into things which to us

appear relatively insignificant. We need only read how Abbé Broussolle explains the feelings with which the French priests regard the Presentation festival: "When on this day we walk up to the altar, there to renew our promises to the Church, we call to our minds the example of the Holy Virgin, who when she was still a little child, walked up the steps of the Temple *without once looking back.*" [26] It is the idea of a holy and irrevocable initiation into religious mysteries that has made Mary's visit to the Temple so favourite a subject for pious meditation. Probably the same idea also led to churches being named after the Madonna's achievement on the holy staircase—*Maria ad gradus*—and to her zeal in reaching the Temple chambers being described at length in most of the legends and poems concerning the Virgin. In the office for the feast of the Presentation, the coming to the Temple is spoken of as a solemn and serious act, an *ascensio montis Domini, i.e.* an ascent to the "mountain and house of God." [27] The "miracle" of the three-year-old child being able without help to dance up the high steps, does not seem, however, to have acquired any great importance in literature. In some authors the occurrence has even been considerably modified. According to Brother Philip, for example, the presentation only took place during the Virgin's seventh year,[28] while the *Vita rhythmica* and Walther von Rheinau retain the original chronology, but in order to make the scene more natural, make Mary crawl up the staircase like a child.[29]

In pictorial art, the coming to the Temple has played a yet more important rôle than in literature. Before the time—the beginning of the fifteenth century—when Mary began to be represented as being taught to read by Anna, it was the only scene from

the Virgin's childhood that had been portrayed. The motive also was particularly suited for treatment in the decoration of churches. For the inhabitants of cloisters nothing could be more edifying than the picture of the female novice, who so willingly exchanged the home of her childhood for the Temple, and in addition the subject offered many opportunities for artistic representation—a stately Temple architecture, priests in gorgeous robes, the young girls who followed the Virgin on her leaving home, and the crowds of people admiring the confident and graceful bearing of the tender creature.

In oriental art the narrative of the Protoevangile is illustrated with an exact fidelity to detail. The torch-bearing girls, for instance, are minutely painted on Byzantine manuscripts, such as the Greek menology of the year 1025 and the homilies of the monk James. In the illustrations to the latter manuscript, the Virgin is followed by Solomon's sixty warriors, who by their presence lend increased dignity to the procession. "Mary advances," so runs the text to this picture, "and purifies the earth by the touch of her feet. She is not adorned with costly apparel, but the mantle of her innocence makes her fairer than the virgins following her, even as the light of the sun darkens the stars."[80] This contrast between the Madonna and her suite has been sacrificed by the European painters. In their pictures we see no long procession, but only the Virgin herself, ascending the stairs. Taddeo Gaddi and Giovanni da Milano, indeed, with a touching inability to render the childish proportions, have portrayed before the Temple some dwarf-like figures, who probably represent Mary's playfellows; but with the later painters, as also with Giotto, even these remnants of Mary's following are absent. If the compositions thus became less rich in

detail, on the other hand the technical skill of the artist has rendered possible a more expressive representation of the chief moments of the situation. The Mary of Gaddi and Giovanni da Milano still *walks* in quite an ordinary way up the steps; in Gaddi's picture, the Virgin, contrary to the legend, turns back towards her admiring friends; and there is neither grace nor dance in the German painter's pictures of the visit to the Temple. Ghirlandajo, on the other hand, makes the Virgin run up the stairs with light steps, and we see from her fluttering garments how eager she is to reach the priest awaiting her. Carpaccio has not attempted to render any dancing movement, but has instead made Mary a serious aspirant, who with bowed head and a candle in her hand humbly approaches the holy place. In Cima's representation, we are impressed above all by the conscious security with which the Virgin, erect and firm, ascends the high steps. Tintoretto, again, has achieved a powerful effect by letting her delicate form outline itself freely against a cloudy evening sky. No one, however, has succeeded in giving such an impression of God having really poured out His grace over Mary, as Titian when he painted the little Madonna, who, surrounded by a halo, walks up to the Temple with one hand carrying her dress and with the other one pointing in the direction of her ascent. Her walk shows dignified grace and happy confidence; she is serious and at the same time childlike; a Nazarite who understands the high import of mysteries, but at the same time a little girl, whose innocent and inimitable grace make her "dear to all the people of Israel." [81]

In some renderings of the presentation, the artists have not been content with picturing Mary's passage up the Temple stairs. They allow us to look into one of

the inner rooms of the Temple, in the background of the picture, in which the Virgin is received by the High Priest, or kneels with him before the altar.[82] Such a representation of two successive moments in one picture was not unusual in mediaeval art, and the fact that Mary performs her devotion at a *Christian* altar cannot be regarded as a disturbing anomaly. On the contrary, at least one Catholic art critic has had some little misgivings because the Virgin has been represented in some cases as praying before the Jewish Ark of the Covenant. Thus Grimouard de S. Laurent points out in his *Guide de l'art chrétien* that Israel's Palladium had disappeared during the Babylonian captivity; and even if it had been preserved, it would be inconceivable, he says, that the Temple servants should allow Mary to enter a room which only the High Priest had a right to visit. All these circumstances, however, are brought forward by the orthodox author merely in order that he may be able to assert more vehemently how justifiable and how natural it was in *symbolical* compositions to represent Mary before the Ark of the Covenant. The artists and spectators ought only to remember that such a subject cannot be grasped otherwise than mystically. Even if no earthly being permitted a woman to enter the Holy of holies, the angels may have often transported Mary into that chamber, which was, as it were, made to receive her;[83] and nothing could be more significant to theological thought than the idea that the new Ark, which was to contain the gospel, was placed before the shrine which hid the tables of the law. This ingenious idea has been rhetorically expressed by Bossuet in a sketch for a sermon: "Open, O Temple, thine eternal gates; behold the Church that is represented before the Church, the sanctuary before the sanctuary,

and the real Ark, in which God Himself rests, before the figurative Ark, in which He is symbolically enclosed."[84]

The poetic editors of the Mary legend have strangely enough failed to notice the symbolism contained in the meeting between the old and the new Ark. On the other hand, however, they have known well how to describe the Madonna, whose person is perpetually associated in the theological system with the Mass-miracle, as a protectress of the altar and of altar implements. Together with the other virgins, Mary takes care that the cloths of the Mass-table are always kept intact and clean. It was purposely forgotten that the Jewish sanctuary was not a Christian temple, and the Virgin was portrayed as the ideal for a Catholic sacristan. During her residence in the Temple Mary not only perfected herself in that ideal domesticity demanded by the care of the holy linen, vessels, lamps, and candles, but she was also initiated into all the mysteries and prophesies that were to receive their explanation and fulfilment in her person. It was the Temple priest who gave her that instruction which the Renaissance artists, contrary to all tradition, made her receive from her mother Anna; and the priests found in Mary a diligent pupil, who absorbed without difficulty all the theological knowledge that had been revealed to the Jews of the Old Covenant. She knew all the books of the Bible, and could interpret both their literal and their hidden meaning. How imposing is the impression of her learning that we receive from the description in the *Vita rhythmica*:[85]—

Omne vetus testamentum fuit ei notum,
Sic quoque cito capiebat intellectum totum,
Sensum tropologici, mistici, moralis,
Nec non anagogici sive literalis;
Totam sacram paginam cum philosophia
Celestis sapiente didicit Maria.

It was also only natural that neither texts nor commentaries could offer any difficulty to her who, even in childhood, stood in close relationship with the Highest. Mary lived only for sacred service, in communion with God and His angels. These latter awoke her daily, when—as the Protoevangile informs us—they brought her the heavenly food which alone was worthy to nourish her "viscera sacrifera."[86] Mediaeval imagination loved to dwell upon these angel visits, and Wernher von Tegernsee even indicates that Gabriel entertained a virtuous "Minne" for the Holy Virgin.[87] This assertion certainly was not thought shocking during the period of romantic love-poetry, and it must not be interpreted as implying any kind of doubt as to the Virgin's absolute chastity. She was pure in mind and thought, and—in this respect, too, she was a model for the pious brides of Christ—she had dedicated her "Magdthum" to the heavenly Bridegroom. Therefore she felt overwhelmed when she learnt that she had been promised to a man. She would rather have died than be exposed to an earthly marriage, for the Highest was—so we are told by Brother Philip—"her joy and her mirth, her laughter and her weeping, her life and death, and the mirror of her eyes and her soul's light":—

ich mac von dir gescheiden niht,
du bist mîn und ich bin dîn,
ich wil immer bî dir sîn.[88]

When, finally, Mary consented to go with Joseph, this was only due to the fact that an angel appeared and assured her that Joseph, too, was pure and chaste, and that he would be a watchful guardian of her virtue.

It had already been stated in the Protoevangile that, according to the agreement of both parties, the connection between Joseph and Mary was to be

only a feigned marriage. This view was held by the leading mediaeval theologians. The nuptials between the holy pair were regarded as a purely formal ceremony, and special reasons were thought out to account for the fact that Providence had found it needful ever to guide the Virgin into a relationship which, at any rate for the world, looked like a marriage. S. Bernard has ingeniously summarised these motives under seven heads. The mystery, he says, had to be concealed from the devils, whose attention would have been aroused if an unmarried and virtuous Virgin had borne a child. The pious husband had to protect Mary's virginity; and he could give her all the help she needed during her earthly life. Through Joseph the Divine Child's descent could be attached to a human line, and this also served to divert unwarranted curiosity from its mysterious origin. Further, her marriage protected the Virgin from calumny; and the fact that she, too, had been a wife sanctified the position of married women. Finally, by her nuptials Mary testified in favour of the Catholic Church's sacrament of marriage.[89]

This last argument is in itself sufficient to explain why the patrons of Catholic art were so willing to decorate the walls of churches with pictures of the nuptials of Mary and Joseph. The holy wedding, as is well known, has been one of the most popular subjects of Christian painting, and the renderings of it by lo Spagna and Raphael are too familiar to need description. As this motive did not afford opportunity for artists to reveal any new sides of Mary's personality, it is not necessary to dwell on it further here. All the different compositions correspond in their essentials. Mary stretches out her hand towards Joseph's ring shyly and seriously, and we understand that only obedience induces her to bind

herself in a union which, at any rate outwardly, is a marriage; while Joseph receives her into his care with humility, but shows nothing of the joy or pride of a newly-wedded husband. One is tempted to imagine that he has learnt that he is only the representative of a lofty and absent bridegroom. Mary's nuptials constitute, indeed, a marriage by proxy. Her earthly husband will guard the Lord's tabernacle on behalf of the Highest, and the simple craftsman will offer his home and his name to the Son of God. In virtue of his profession, he was, even better than any one else, entitled to represent the real father of Mary's Child, for it must not be thought that there was no reason in his being a carpenter. Sicardus Cremonensis has, with a sublime play upon words, explained why the Divine Man chose Joseph for His earthly foster father:[40] "He preferred to be called the carpenter's son, rather than let His mother be stoned as an unmarried child-bearer; and in truth He was the son of a carpenter, but of Him who carpented the sun and the morning red."

CHAPTER XIV

THE ANNUNCIATION

. . . . . .
Ma vorrei mi mostrasti il volto e i gesti,
L' umil risposta e quel casto timore,
L' ardente carità, la fede viva
Della Donna del cielo, e con che onesti
Desiri ascolti, accetti, onori, e scriva
I divini precetti entro nel core.

VITTORIA COLONNA, *Rime sacre e morali.*

THE Catholic legends have not much to tell about the marriage of Joseph and Mary, but it is easy to imagine how the faithful regarded the relationship between them. The fact that Mary was nominally a wife, and that Joseph had been wedded to her, did not prevent the pious couple from being considered a model for all Christian ascetics. Hagiographic literature offered many examples of men and women who concealed a monastic manner of living under the outer form of marriage. All that was known of these holy connections should be applicable to the story of the Madonna and her aged companion. When, after much persuasion, Joseph consented to be wedded to Mary, he gave, so it was probably believed, his hand to his "child-wife," or rather his young ward, and introduced her to a marriage such as that between Cecilia and Valerianus, Chrysanthus and Daria, or Henry and Kunigunda. He was as pious and considerate as these

men; but he was besides, from a consciousness of his own unimportance, a humble servant of her and her Divine Child. Joseph, who is the patron saint of modest and quiet people, cannot, according to Roman Catholic ideas, be regarded otherwise than as a retiring head of the house who in no way disturbed Mary's relationship to the divine mysteries. After her introduction to her new home she remained a virgin of the Lord, just as when she had lived in the Temple; and consequently she was, in all but name, a single woman when she received the heavenly message from Gabriel.

In this meeting with God's envoy we have to recognise the decisive event in the life of the Mother of God. As may easily be understood, therefore, the Annunciation has given matter for religious meditation, more than any other moment in the Madonna's history. The angel's promise embraced the whole of the glad tidings afterwards conveyed to the faithful by the New Testament, and in his words was found the canonical expression of the idea of Mary as "full of grace" and "blest among women." Consequently it is only natural that the champions of the Madonna cult should have glorified in picture and writing the scene when Gabriel "came to a Virgin in Nazareth."

As early as the first centuries, the Church Fathers wrote sermons in praise of the Virgin, which principally consisted of a rhetorical piling-up of the epithets bestowed on Mary, preceded by the formula of greeting in the angel's address.[1] The "Ave" was endlessly varied both in verse and prose, and the short biblical sentences were amplified in extensive paraphrases. According to this simple scheme men have for two thousand years unwearyingly continued to write and preach on the Annunciation miracle,[2] and the artists

have illustrated the great subject with no less zeal, though with greater variation.

It has been contended that the Annunciation motive was treated even in the earliest Christian art; but it is not certain that the two frescoes of the first centuries—in the Catacombs of Priscilla and in those of Peter and Marcellinus—which are brought forward in support of these assertions really represent Gabriel's meeting with Mary.[8] Even if this were the case, these two compositions would stand alone in the art-production which dates from the time previous to the Council at Ephesus. After the dogma of Mary's high position had been officially recognised, however, the motive suddenly achieved unique popularity. From the beginning of the fifth century we find it on sarcophagus reliefs, on small ivory pictures, in mosaic work and on wall-paintings. Finally, during the later Middle Ages, when the Madonna cult reached its all-powerful position in religious life, the Annunciation pictures occupied an absolutely dominant place in Church decoration. Altar-pieces seldom lacked such rendering of the glad tidings; and even if the picture itself treated some other subject drawn from Christian legend, yet, above it, or in one of the small compartments in the predella under the picture, was represented the event by which the Virgin was chosen as a tabernacle for God. The outer surfaces of the doors of the altar cabinets usually have pictures of this mystery, which is a preparation and an introduction to all the mystical scenes represented on the inner reliefs and paintings of the cabinet. Finally, in the Church itself, the Madonna and the announcing angel frequently appear on either side of the great triumphal arch which separates the nave from the holy space in the choir, or they confront

the worshipper above the middle doorway of the chief façade.[4] Thus even the outer arrangements emphasised the importance of the Annunciation as the first great and fundamental miracle, which constitutes the necessary condition for all the later events in the sacred history.

It is only natural that in these numberless pictures there should appear many different ways of interpreting the subject. If, therefore, one wishes to gain a general view of the renderings of the Annunciation, the superabundant material must be divided into groups. An exact classification would be difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to carry out, but even at the first view we can distinguish two types representing two essentially different methods of treatment.[5]

In pictures belonging to the first type the Annunciation is regarded as a mystic event, which is primarily important as a step in the great work of atonement. All historical details are unnecessary to such a conception. Just as S. Luke, in his narrative, gives no information as to the immediate circumstances of Gabriel's visit, so the artists confine themselves to representing the two persons only. By this abstract method of composition the event is removed outside the limitations of time and space, and thereby gains in symbolical significance.

The second kind of Annunciation picture is marked by a richer composition. The artists seek, by the aid of explanatory details, to give an idea, or at any rate an indication, of the place where the great meeting came to pass. Mary is portrayed not merely as a Virgin as such, but as a woman in a definite environment, and thereby the situation appears to the spectator as an historic event in the Madonna's life. For pictures of this kind the Gospel of S. Luke offers altogether too

meagre a text. Artists have therefore been led to illustrate the more detailed narratives of the Apocryphal legends; or they have, without any respect for historical facts, borrowed from their own immediate surroundings the *milieu* in which they have placed their characters. In many cases Annunciation pictures of this kind have the effect rather of German, Italian, or Flemish studies from life than representations of an universal religious motive.

By reason of its very simplicity, the first method of treatment allowed an expression of the *absolute* element in the mystery. It was therefore calculated to appeal to those dogmatic theologians who during the later Middle Ages laboured still further to emphasise Mary's rôle in the Atonement. This abstract composition further harmonised in purely aesthetic respects with the stylistic ideal of the Renaissance. It is therefore richly represented during the most flourishing period of Italian art. Fra Angelico, Donatello, Piero dei Franceschi, and Perugino have refrained in their pictures of the Annunciation from portraying in any way the *milieu*. In Giotto's paintings on the triumphal arch in the Arena Chapel at Padua, the motive is compressed into its most essential elements, and even in Romanesque churches representations of the Annunciation exist which are as simple as the gospel narrative itself.

Of early Christian art-production, on the contrary, the Catacomb paintings already mentioned, and a little ivory plate from the period between the fifth and the seventh centuries (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), are the only known examples of Annunciation pictures from which all historically descriptive elements have been excluded. The rest of the carvings, mosaics,

and manuscript illustrations represent the holy event in a definite environment, which is either pictured in detail or indicated by some symbolical object. This method of treatment is predominant during the Romanesque period, and it continues to be employed by the side of the simpler compositions throughout the Renaissance right down to modern times. The traditions and the literary models allowed of many variations in the method of representation, which can only be briefly characterised here.

A clear influence from the Gospel of James is evident in those compositions which deal with the preliminary Annunciation at the well. The artists, however, have departed from their texts when they portrayed an angel as well, for according to the legend Mary only heard a voice addressing her. The Madonna is represented either as kneeling before the well, or as standing upright by it and letting her jug down on a line. She turns round frightened to the angel, who in some pictures descends towards her from heaven, and in others stands by her side on the ground. Some small ivory plates from the sixth and seventh centuries are the earliest examples of this type of picture.[6] At the beginning of the twelfth century the vision at the well was still portrayed in illustrations to the homilies of the Byzantine monk James, and the motive has received its most famous treatment in a great mosaic, dating from the preceding century, in the transept of S. Mark's, at Venice.[7] During the subsequent period, on the contrary, the subject was completely forgotten. It is due, probably, not to any influence from the Protoevangile, but to a striving after aesthetically decorative effect, that some artists of the Renaissance—Andrea del Sarto, Francia, Crivelli and Titian, for example—make the Annunciation take place

out in the open air in front of the façade of a stately building.[8] It also was probably a pure coincidence that led Francesco Rizzo to place Mary in a mountainous region by a spring, from which a young man fetches water in a vessel.[9] In spite of the landscape surrounding, we have to suppose that these pictures, like most mediaeval and modern works of art, represent the later angel-greeting, *i.e.* the Annunciation proper. In the majority of compositions, Mary, according to the canonical and the apocryphal narratives alike, receives Gabriel's visit in a room.[10]

If the pictures harmonise in this respect, however, they vary in their ways of representing the events accompanying the visit, for many different views were possible as to the circumstances in which the Annunciation took place. Thus, to begin with the subject which lies nearest to the question of place, there might be a dispute about the time of the sacred event. The Gospels gave no indication in this respect, and the assertions of theological authors were based only on probabilities. Some considered that the Annunciation and Incarnation must have taken place at the same time as the manna was poured down upon the earth, *i.e.* early in the morning. They said, further, that as Jesus had come out of His mother's womb like the sun out of a cloud, His birth also must have been announced at the break of day. Other authors argued that the glad tidings were communicated in the middle of the day, because Sarah had received the promise of Isaac—the Saviour's prototype in the Old Testament—during the hottest hour of the day (Genesis xviii. 1 *seq.*).[11] The day, with its clear light and its bustle of work, was, however, regarded by the majority of authors as an unsuitable time for the great mystery, and the famous Jesuit, Suarez, asserts that it was

midnight when Gabriel entered Mary's room.[12] Even if this view did not receive the Church's sanction, at any rate the evening has been generally considered the most probable time for the miracle. The twilight, the stillness, and the rest from labour, make the evening the most religious part of the day. There was, besides, a natural symbolism in the idea that God joined Himself to man just at the moment when the sun sinks to the earth. This thought was impressed on the minds of the faithful when the Church during the fourteenth century began to ordain the saying of an *Ave Maria* during the moments when the bells rang in the evening rest. The bell-ringing itself was probably a purely civic signal, which at the *hora ignitegii* reminded the inhabitants of town and village that they ought in the interests of public safety to extinguish the fires on their hearths; but when this warning became associated with the prescribed prayers, the message of the bells acquired a purely religious meaning. And by the help of that *a posteriori* reasoning which is so often met with in theological argument, it was asserted quite definitely that the Annunciation occurred at the evening twilight *because* the Angelus prayer is read at that time.[13]

It is not easy to decide how great an influence the different theories as to the moment of the Annunciation have exercised on pictorial art. The treatment of the phenomena of light continues, even during the Renaissance, to be so generalised that it can seldom be seen whether the painters desired to represent a dawn, a midday sunshine, or an evening twilight. Where no details show the contrary, we may suppose that the time is early evening, *i.e.* the hour of the Angelus; but there are many pictures which indicate by easily comprehensible signs that the artists had a later hour in

mind. Sometimes a lighted candle shows that it was dark in Mary's room before Gabriel entered[14]—his presence has naturally lit up his surroundings.[15] In those cases where the Madonna has been represented in her bedroom we have to suppose that the Annunciation was thought to have taken place at night. The Virgin, so one imagines the course of events, has withdrawn to her innermost chamber, where she was wont to pass the most silent hours of the day in divine meditation. She has, as S. Bernard described it, carefully bolted her door so that no human being may be able to disturb her peace; but the angel, by reason of the fineness of his essence, has been able to make his way through closed doors, and surprises her in her deepest devotion.[16]

That Gabriel, as some painters have represented the story, should wake Mary from her sleep, violates all orthodox traditions. A composition, such as Rossetti's "Ecce Ancilla Domini," would certainly not be approved by strict Catholics.

From these controversial points it is natural to pass to the question of how Mary was occupied when Gabriel entered. The Gospel of James expressly says that the Virgin sat at her purple work. This narrative has been followed in all the earlier Christian art. Even in the most insignificant and most primitive sculptures one can usually distinguish a distaff, which the Virgin holds in her hand, or a basket and a ball which stand by her side. These attributes are even prescribed in the official rules for the manufacture of religious pictures given in the famous handbook of painting from Mount Athos.[17] From the beginning of the twelfth century, however, the spinning requisites become more and more rare in Annunciation compositions, being replaced by a desk and a book. The artists have clearly been influenced

by the accounts of Mary's religious meditations given by the theological authors. They make the Virgin look up from her reading when Gabriel enters. If she is represented as sitting, the book is usually open on a desk in front of her, or rests in her lap. In those compositions, again, where the Madonna is an upright figure, she holds the book in one hand.[18] In the lineal composition of her form this gesture has the same function as the holding of the distaff in the older representations.

Where the book is open the artists have often inscribed on its leaves those words of Isaiah's prophecy, in which, according to the theological interpretation, Mary's virgin-birth had been foretold. Hereby the pictures came to illustrate a thought expressed in S. Bernard's commentary on the Annunciation. For the Madonna, says the pious author, had reached in her Bible reading the verses in which it is said: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah vii. 14). In the humbleness of her heart she was thinking to herself how happy the woman would be of whom this could be said—when in the same moment Gabriel entered and gave her the application of the text.[19] We imagine that we see how astonished she was by these unexpected tidings, when, as is observable in many Annunciation pictures, she marks with her finger the place in the book where she broke off her reading to look up at Gabriel.

While we are concerned with the accessories of Annunciation pictures, it is necessary to say a few words also about the angel's attributes. In the older pictures Gabriel is usually provided with a staff, which indicates his office of God's herald. The staff or sceptre is sometimes crowned by a mound and sometimes by a

little cross.[20] During the Renaissance this *insigne* is often changed for a blossoming twig, which leads the thoughts to the root of Jesse and to the flowering staff of Joseph. In a number of cases the artists seem to have chosen at random the flower they placed in the angel's hand, but usually Gabriel bears a lily.

This lily, however, is not the only thing that blossoms in Annunciation pictures. From the beginning of the thirteenth century it becomes a rule—which is closely observed in glass paintings and manuscript illustrations —to place between the Virgin and the angel a vase containing a high-stemmed plant.[21] During the Renaissance this plant is also most frequently a lily, while during the thirteenth century any flower seems to have been thought suitable for the purpose. Such an arrangement naturally heightens the decorative effect of the compositions, but it must not be thought that it was originally adopted for any purely aesthetic purpose. The flowers in the vase and the flowers in Gabriel's hand have a symbolical significance, and they therefore help to explain to the initiated the mystic purport of the situation. For the Annunciation was the festival of early spring. Christ, whose birth was foretold by Gabriel, was a flower that blossomed from the stem of Jesse; His mother, to whom the imagery of the Song of Solomon was applied, was a flower of the fields and a "lily of the valley." And the place where the Annunciation occurred had a name, Nazareth, which in Hebrew, according to an old but incorrect interpretation, means flower. Such a meeting of associations was naturally not left unutilised by the theological authors. It was often set forth in sermons how the promise of the birth of God as man was connected with the spring's promise of flowers and fruit. S. Bernard in particular worked out the flower symbolism

of the Annunciation in poetic and ingenious conceits. The flower, he said, had been willing, at the time of flowering, to be born of a flower in a flower—*i.e.* Jesus permitted Himself to be announced to Mary at Nazareth in the spring: "Flos nasci voluit de flore, in flore, et floris tempore."[22] It is a rhetorical bouquet of this kind that the artists illustrated when they represented the flower of spring or of Nazareth between the flower Mary and the flower Gabriel bears in his hand—as a promise of Mary's flower child.

When, however, the plant, or the stem in Gabriel's hand, is a lily, it does not stand for Nazareth or the spring, but refers to the immaculate conception of the Divine Child. For the lily is the primitive symbol for innocence, just as it is often used as an attribute of fruitfulness—which, before Mary became a mother, could never be combined with virginity.[23] As a symbol of innocence it has been perpetually associated with the Madonna's person. The legends tell, for example, of a Jew who withstood all attempts at conversion because he could not be convinced that Jesus had been born without a human father. "I will not believe in this doctrine," he said, pointing to a withered plant, "before I see a lily spring out of that stalk"; but he immediately consented to be baptised when, in the same moment, a large white flower blossomed on the stem.[24] By a similar miracle a pious Dominican monk was cured of his doubt of the Madonna's virgin motherhood. He had gone to S. Aegidius for comfort in his soul's distress, and Aegidius removed his doubt without wasting many words. He merely struck the earth with his staff, and immediately a lily sprang up as a sign of virginity before birth. Then he struck anew with his staff

for virginity in birth, and another lily arose with stem and flower. Finally, he smote his staff on the earth a third time, with the words, "Virgo post partum," and a third lily confirmed the virginity after birth.[25] We are reminded of this pious legend when we see that in their Annunciation pictures artists have often given three blossoms to the plant or to Gabriel's stem. In some cases the demands of the situation have been so closely followed that only one of these blossoms is open, while the other two are buds—to show that at the Annunciation there could be question only of the first kind of virginity, *i.e.* "virginitas ante partum."[26] The staff or the flower which was the starting-point for this excursus on the symbolism of lilies is not, however, an invariable attribute of Gabriel. There are many Annunciation pictures in which the angel approaches Mary without showing any sign of his lofty mission, but it has in these cases been denoted by other means that he is a messenger. In some German compositions he hands the Virgin a letter from heaven, a naïve idea which probably has some foundation in contemporary literature; it has at any rate been expressed in old oriental poetry on Mary.[27] In other pictures, again, Gabriel is provided with a hunting horn, and as a hunter of the mystic unicorn, he blows his *Ave* to the Virgin, in whose bosom the fabulous creature has found refuge.[28] The ingenious symbolism introduced into these pictures, however, has no direct significance for the understanding of Mary's personality. The ideas of her held by artists and poets are characterised above all by the way in which the bearing and expression of the young woman and her supernatural guest have been portrayed.

The demeanour of the Madonna is determined

clearly enough by the text which the painters had to illustrate. Even had they known nothing besides the canonical narrative, they would have been compelled, in the figure of the Virgin, to express her fear of the great news. The Gospel of S. Luke expressly says that Mary "was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." These words have been extensively commented upon, and a proof has even been sought in them of the virgin modesty of the pure girl. The older authors, Johannes Chrysostomus, Gregorius Thaumaturgos, and Hesychius, consider, in accordance with the Gospel, that it was the import of the news which frightened her,[29] but Ambrosius in his ascetic tracts gives quite another explanation of Luke's text. We see how anxious he is to represent Mary as a model for all virtuous women. "It is the proper way of virgins," he says, "to tremble and shake as soon as a man enters the room, and to be terrified whenever a man addresses them. Women may learn from Mary how to apply the proper rules of womanhood. She was alone in her closed chamber, that no man might see her. And only an angel could find his way to her. She was alone, without company and without a witness, that she might not be disturbed by any unworthy address when the angel approached her. Learn, O virgins, to avoid unseemly conversations: Mary was terrified even by an angel's greeting."[30]

It was, however, as Ambrosius is at pains to point out in another treatise, only Gabriel's human form that aroused Mary's fear. She, who was used to the society of angels, regained her confidence as soon as she noticed that her guest was not unknown to her.

Ambrosius was not alone in this ingenious explanation. In his notable letter to Eustochium Hieronymus

gives a similar interpretation of the Virgin's emotion at the Annunciation. "When the angel Gabriel entered to Mary in the form of a man and greeted her, she became so disquieted and terrified that she could not answer him, for never before had she been addressed by a man. Later she recognised the messenger and answered him. And she who had trembled before the man, speaks with an angel unmoved by fear." [31]

According to these explanations, when Mary saw that Gabriel was an angel, she had no doubt that he really brought a message from the Highest. Gregorius Thaumaturgos, on the other hand, has made the Virgin experience for a few moments those misgivings which troubled so many of the pious ascetics and visionaries, who often feared that their visions were illusions sent out by the great deceiver. She asked herself, says Gregorius, whether the *Ave* did not threaten some misfortune, like the promise given to the mother of her race by the serpent. "Had the devil perhaps disguised himself anew like an angel of light?" [32] With a similar anxiety, Mary answers Gabriel's greeting in Ephraim Syrus's annunciation hymn, "I fear, Lord, to accept Thy word. For my mother Eve fell from her glory because she listened to the friendly word of the serpent."

In the same hymn the oriental poet has described the angel as so great and mighty that the Virgin is frightened by his mere appearance. "I beseech thee," she answers him, "terrify me not. Thou bearest glowing coals, burn me not. Strange and wonderful is what thou sayest, and the meaning of thy words I cannot grasp. . . . Thou art a flame. Strike me not with fear. Thou art surrounded by glowing coals, I tremble before thee. O thou fire-being, how shall I believe thee? All that thou sayest is new to me." [33]

Ephraim's rhetorical and effective description of Gabriel's appearance probably stands quite alone in early Christian literature, but in any case, the theological writers have emphasised the element of power in the person of the messenger. In this respect, special weight was attached to the fact that in the opinion of mediaeval philologists the name Gabriel signified the "strength of God."[84] It was said that he who was chosen to announce the miracle by which the Virgin birth was to break the power of eternal natural laws must himself have been powerful and glorious above all others. Gabriel, the heavenly bridegroom's speaker, was a paranymphus, who was comparable in power with the Highest Himself, because he represented God's own might. This thought has been expressed in lofty diction in a mediaeval poem, which long bore the name of Abelard :—

Mittit ad virginem
Non quemvis angelum,
Sed fortitudinem
Suam, archangelum
Amator hominis.[85]

It is not unjustifiable to suppose that ideas as to the Annunciation have been universally influenced by that mighty introductory strophe, which in Church song became well known to the faithful. The gospel too was a *mysterium terribile*, a message dreadful in its greatness; but care was taken on the other hand that Mary should not be crushed by the overwhelming greeting. Just as the text of S. Luke's Gospel was carefully commented upon for the purpose of emphasising the Virgin's modesty, so also zealous theologians dilated upon the angel's comforting answer, "Fear not, for thou hast found grace before God." The Virgin's answer, "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?"

gave rise to long and ingenious explanations. It must not be imagined that Mary faithlessly doubted the tidings. Her question contains only a humble surprise, which was immediately satisfied by Gabriel's information.[36] The fact that Mary then obediently and submissively offered herself as an instrument for the divine purpose with the words, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it unto me as thou sayest," was regarded as a personally meritorious action on her part. Her consent was necessary for the fulfilment of the work of Atonement, and God was indebted to her for the help she gave by her willingness. Thus her bearing towards Gabriel was in every way a contrast to that of the mother of her race towards the beguiling serpent.[37] At the angel greeting, the part played by woman in Paradise, said the Catholic philologists, was changed in the same way that Eva's baneful name was converted into the auspicious *Ave*, a word which with its *a* privative signified that the world would be freed from woe.

It may appear like childish playing with language, when in numberless poems Mary is sung of as "mutans Evae nomen," or when she is invoked, "Ave—transfer nos a vae." But for mediaeval poets who exercised their skill on acrostics and involved rhymings, this kind of juggling with letters was quite in place in serious religious poems; and even for the humble worshippers the play upon words was more than a technical artifice, because it recalled the contrast between the obedient submissiveness of the ideal woman and the first woman's headstrong lawlessness.[38]

The succession of different emotions described in the literature of the Annunciation could not of course be rendered in its entirety in any single painting. Artists have sought to express in the Virgin's figure either her

fear at Gabriel's entrance, or her questioning wonder at his words, or her humble acceptance of the message. In the angel, again, they have represented either his mighty and terrifying approach, or his quieting and comforting appearance, or the reverence which he, although a supernatural being, felt for her who had been chosen by God. These different moments can to a certain extent be united, but there is always one of them which is emphasised at the expense of the others. The choice has been determined partly by the personal preference of the artist, and partly by the stylistic principles prevalent during the different periods of art.

By reason of technical imperfections, complex mental states could not be expressed in the oldest mosaics and reliefs. However, the Virgin's timidity towards Gabriel was successfully represented by means of some simple gestures. By merely pressing the palm of her right hand to her breast, she shows how unworthy she feels. This movement gives a still more convincing expression of humility when, as is the case in an Armenian manuscript illustration, and in the wall-painting in S. Urbano at Rome,[39] it is combined with a slight inclination of the head. In other representations surprise is increased to fear, as Mary with both hands outstretched seems to repel the unexpected and overwhelming impression.[40]

The motive of the extended hand is often repeated in Romanesque and Gothic sculpture, but the expression is varied by new gestures. Sometimes the Virgin presses her hand to her breast, as if she would shun the great tidings.[41] She bends and twists her body as one who seeks to avoid something oppressive,[42] or, on the contrary, she shows by humbly extending her arms that she willingly accepts the choice of the Highest.

There are also many church-door sculptures in which Mary's figure is motionless, and only a slight bending of the head indicates her consent to Gabriel's words.

It is the still and tranquil expression which gives the dominating tone to the early Renaissance treatment of the subject. Giotto is the great model also in the matter of Annunciation compositions. In his frescoes on the triumphal arch in the Arena chapel, Mary is at once dignified and humble, as, with hands crossed over her breast, she kneels before Gabriel; and the angel, who is likewise kneeling, has a majesty which is serious indeed, but so mild that it could not have frightened the Virgin. Giotto's immediate pupils have represented Mary in different positions—standing upright, bending forward or kneeling—and they have also varied the angel's bearing, but their compositions always express a feeling of quiet devotion. We see that it is not Mary's surprise, but her submissiveness, that they wished to picture. This moment in the situation is the subject also for the pictures of Fra Angelico, Piero dei Franceschi, Filippo Lippi, and Perugino.[43] With Simone di Martino, Donatello, and Ghirlandajo, on the other hand, the gestures of surprise and warding-off return,[44] and the blending of humility and fear meet with a refined expression in Botticelli's Annunciation.[45]

With the later Italian artists this dramatically expressive characteristic becomes more and more predominant. Tintoretto paints the extremity of fear in the Virgin, and he has made her terror intelligible, for Gabriel flies like a storm-wind through the collapsing walls of her room.[46] Lorenzo Lotto has made Mary stretch forth her hands in almost petrified terror when the angel surprises her from behind, and in order to express fear still more clearly he has introduced a cat,

which runs away frightened from the vision.[47] To a true Catholic the cat probably represents a theological idea, for this animal, which in pictures of the Last Supper was often represented as sitting close to Judas's place, must recall the Evil One, who was terrified at his power being broken by Gabriel's *Ave*. In all other respects, however, Lotto's composition is only nominally a religious work. According to the pious and devotional idea, it was not a violent emotion of this kind which the Virgin experienced at the angel's entry, and it was not with such a surprise that the Highest called Mary to be an instrument of His purpose. The striving for an aesthetic effect has occupied the artist too much for the religious import of the motive to be realised. In the same way, it was not the Catholic idea of the Annunciation which was expressed in pictures such as Paolo Veronese's, where Gabriel dances towards Mary with the grace of a ballet-dancer,[48] or as Titian's, where the announcing angel is a little boy, who runs towards the Virgin joyfully and like a child.[49]

If we are thus compelled to disapprove of the too worldly element in the later Renaissance representations of the Annunciation, still we must admit that the subject was often treated, even during the devout Middle Ages, in a way which did not quite harmonise with the strict seriousness of the mystery. The situation itself, the meeting between the young virgin and the heavenly youth, was such that a deviation from the severe theological interpretation could with difficulty be avoided. The legend's manner of describing the Annunciation was connected by inevitable and often, probably, unconscious associations with the poetry of earthly life. How much of the primitive and universal lyricism of the folk-song and folk-legend was not hidden

in the idea of a young woman surprised by a greeting when she had gone with her pitcher to the well—that place where Rebecca had met Eleasar, where innumerable nameless women had arranged to see their lovers, and which the erotic poetry of all periods has associated with the memory of love and song? How many naïve ideas of earthly conditions must not have been aroused by those pictures and poems in which Gabriel transmits to the chosen one a letter, or as a postillion blows his greeting to her; and even when these immemorial accessories were missing, how natural was it not to think of Mary as one thinks of an earthly maiden receiving a message from her lover? All the Old Testament prototypes, with which Mary was compared in sermons and poems, lent features of their earthly nature to that ideal type. If the Virgin surpassed Rachel and Esther and the Queen of Sheba in beauty and virtue, yet in any case she was, by the very comparison, to some extent likened to them. Still more was her image influenced by the ideas concerning that woman in whose love for her lover both the rabbis and the Christian theologians had seen a "type" of the relationship of the Highest to His faithful community. However much the commentators tried to insist that the language of the Song of Solomon ought to be interpreted mystically, they could not quite conceal the erotic and sensuous purport of the ancient pastoral poem. Mary, the new Shulamite, was therefore regarded as a bride to the new Solomon, and the Annunciation was understood as a wooing carried on on behalf of the bridegroom by his spokesman, "his strength," the heavenly messenger Gabriel.

In the poems on Mary written by secular bards, this human—or as the theologians would say, all too

human—conception has naturally been more prominent than in sacred poetry. Some French bards have described, quite without reserve, how God saw from a window in heaven the youthful Mary, who is wandering in humble grace upon the earth, and how, charmed by her beauty, He sends down Gabriel to communicate His pleasure to her.[50] Thus not only has the Virgin been described as a bride, but the Highest Himself has been made into a lover.[51] This could still to some extent be combined with respect for God, so long as it was Solomon and his shepherdess who were taken as types of the relationship between Mary and her heavenly bridegroom; but the matter became alarming when the Bible narratives of the aged David began to be applied to the mystic relationship. Even God Himself, it was said, had felt a need of rejuvenation, and Mary filled for Him the same function as the Shunammite woman Abisag, whose warm young body gave new vitality to the aged king (1 Kings i.). The Father became young when he saw the young woman, and the Son was the form in which He was renewed.[52] Therefore it was possible, by daringly carrying this association to its extreme conclusion, to make Mary the pyre in which the old Phoenix was consumed at the Incarnation, only to rise up with the Saviour's body in a glorified shape.[53]

All these curious and, in their expansive detail, absolutely grotesque similes are, of course, openly in conflict with the dogmatic view. They have their interest for universal literary history, but they are in no way characteristic of the Church conception of the Annunciation and Incarnation, and they therefore lie outside the proper subject of this research. What we have to observe is that even in sacred songs written by priests and monks Mary is often praised as a "sponsa

Dei," a bride of God, and Gabriel as a "paranymphus," or a spokesman;[54] and there is reason to suppose that these ideas, even when they were not clearly expressed, played an unconscious part in pious meditations on the Annunciation. The supersensuous, indeed, cannot become quite comprehensible unless it is placed in connection with sensuous phenomena.

From a strictly theological point of view it is certainly regrettable that the dogmatic doctrines were thus drawn down to the level of earthly life, but if one judges the expressions of faith as an outsider, one cannot but feel gratified that the dogmas received an interpretation which gave human life and human warmth to religious art. The pictures of the Madonna come all the nearer to us when we can see in them an idealisation of all the events in an earthly woman's life. Mary, who shrinks from the great tidings, is not only a handmaid of God, called to assist in His plans for the redemption of the race, but she is also the type of the young woman who is frightened at the mystery of life when it comes upon her and drags her out from a still and untroubled solitude. Her timidity is like the timidity of all virgins before the unknown, and she gives her consent with the confidence of a bride who, when she has lost her fear, advances without hesitation towards her new fortune. If the whole of her sex is thus idealised in Mary's person, the male sex is glorified in Gabriel, the "strength of God," who, mighty and aflame but with the careful "Fear not" of a chivalrous protector, enters the chamber of the youthful Virgin. One would like to think that such a humanised conception of the mystery was not entirely absent from any of the artists who introduced so much of the universal poetry of mankind into their representations of the Annunciation.

CHAPTER XV

THE INCARNATION

Den store Hyrdetime atter
til Brudefesten Tegnet gav:
Guds Søn med Guds opelskte Datter
forener sig i Jord og Hav:
berust af Elskovs Baeger
i hendes Indre praeger
han Himlens Billed af.

SCHACK STAFFELDT, *Vaaren.*

IN the canonical gospel nothing is told either of the time of the Incarnation or of the manner in which it took place. The angel merely says to Mary: "Thou *shalt* conceive in thy womb and bear a son. . . . The Holy Spirit *shall* come over thee and the power of the Highest *shall* overshadow thee." The Annunciation contains nothing more than a promise, and Gabriel's sole function is to foretell the miracle. The Apocryphal writings agree in this respect with S. Luke's text; the only new addition to the narrative is the expression in the Proto-evangile, that Mary shall conceive a child "by the word of God." What is meant, however, by the "word;" and how the conception was thought to be brought about, does not clearly appear from this meagre utterance. If theological literature had never expressed itself more definitely about the mystical course of events, Annunciation pictures and poems could not have dealt with any other moments than those dealt with in the

last chapter—that is to say, the meeting of Gabriel and Mary would not have implied anything more than a delivery and an acceptance of an auspicious message.

Pious imagination, however, was not content with any incomplete indications, but wanted to know when and how the Highest had connected His being with human flesh; and it seemed most natural that the miracle should have taken place at the Annunciation itself, which is so closely described in the Gospels, and which, by reason of this description, became so dear a subject for religious meditation.

It is not easy to decide at what time the two sacred events first began to be associated, but it seems as if the Incarnation were described in immediate connection with the Annunciation in one of the "Christian sibyllines," which are thought to date from the end of the second century. The expressions in this writing, however, are so obscure that the interpretation may be disputed. Freely translated (from Geffcken's German translation of the original, which was inaccessible), the passage in question runs as follows:—". . . At first Gabriel revealed his mighty and holy shape, then the Archangel addressed Mary: 'Prepare, O Virgin, to receive God in thy spotless bosom.' While he thus spake, God breathed His grace over the tender maiden. But she was seized with amazement and confusion when she heard it, and she trembled; her mind was stupefied and her heart beat fast at the marvellous message. But before long she rejoiced and her heart was warmed by the voice ('ob der Stimme'). She smiled like a bride, her cheek flushed, joy strengthened her ('ergötzte sie'), shyness cast a spell on her, and her courage returned. But the word flew into her body, in time became

flesh," and, quickened in the womb, formed itself into human shape, and the boy was born in a virgin birth." [1]

If it is not unequivocally asserted in this description that the Incarnation stood in a direct connection with Gabriel's greeting, and if one may perhaps be doubtful as to what voice it was which warmed the Virgin's heart, the Church Fathers in the following centuries allowed no doubt that the Annunciation had brought about the Conception. S. Augustine expressly says that it was God who spoke through the mouth of the angel, and that the Virgin was fertilised through her ear: "et virgo per aurem impregnabatur." [2] The same thought—that the spark of life penetrated Mary's body while she was listening submissively to Gabriel's words—is expressed among others by S. Zeno, S. Proclus, and S. Fulgentius.[3] S. Ephraim says that the divine embryo was produced without Mary losing her virginity, "because the Son abandoned the old way of life, and in a new way, unknown both to nature and the understanding, descended into her body." [4] S. Gaudentius employs quite visual expressions when he describes how God "glides in through Mary's motherly ear to fill her womb," [5] and the poets do not shrink from clothing the concrete idea in terms equally unreserved. Sedulius sings of how the chaste womb was suddenly transformed into a temple of God, and how the untouched woman, who knew no man, conceived the child by the word:—

Domus pudici pectoris
Templum repente fit Dei;
Intacta nesciens virum
Verbo creavit filium.[6]

Ennodius compares the effects of Gabriel's words with a natural fertilisation:—

Quod lingua jecit semen est,
In carne verbum stringitur.[7]

And Fortunatus—or, rather, the unknown writer of the great hymn "Quem terra, pontus, aethera," ascribed to Fortunatus—uses a similar kind of expression :—

Mirantur ergo saecula
Quod angelus fert semina ;
Quod autem virgo concipit
Et corde credens accipit.[8]

The naïve idea of a fertilisation through the ear—which explained the virginity of the Conception intelligibly, and which could, besides, be harmonised with the utterance in the Gospel of John that the "Word became flesh"—survived in religious poetry until the later Middle Ages. In some of the numerous songs on the "Joys of Mary," the pious address Mary with the following often-quoted verses :—

Gaude, Virgo, Mater Christi
Quae per aurem concepisti
Gabriele nuntio.[9]

This expression has indeed been explained by a modern Catholic author as referring to the Virgin's spiritual acceptance of Gabriel's message. According to Léon Gautier, the poet only desired to express that the Incarnation took place in a supernatural and inexplicable way after Mary had heard with her ears the words of Annunciation.[10] But even if so spiritual a construction could, by a strained use of all permissible methods of interpretation, be applied to those Latin poems in which Gabriel is spoken of as a "seminiverbius," and Mary as "verbo foeta,"[11] yet we have no right to assume a figurative meaning in those *popular* songs which describe the mystery of the Incarnation with

similar expressions. A German scourging song of the year 1349 says quite unambiguously :—

Diu botschaft gie zeîr oran in
der hailig gaist flos damit in
der worht in ir libe daz
das cristus got und mensche waz.

"The message entered through her ear, and the Holy Ghost flew in with it, and so worked in her body that Christ became God and man." [12]

A concrete view of the Conception through the ear also appears in a great number of the German mediaeval hymns written by professional poets, and it even seems as if scholastic theology itself was not quite a stranger to this point of view. Thus S. Bernard says in one of his sermons, "missus est interim Gabriel angelus a Deo, ut verbum patris per aurem virginis in ventrem et mentem ipsius eructaret, ut eadem via intraret antidotum, qua venenum intraverat," *i.e.* the angel Gabriel was sent by God to vomit the Father's word through the Virgin's ear into her womb ("venter") and mind, that thus the antidote might enter by the same way as the poison.[13] The poison, as may be easily understood, is the word of temptation which the serpent dropped into the ears of Eve. Bernard here employs a comparison between the serpent and Gabriel, which had already been made use of by S. Zeno and S. Ephraim [14] in connection with the fertilisation through the ear.

The assumption of a "conceptio per aurem" was, however, only one of the hypotheses by the aid of which it was attempted to explain the miraculous Incarnation. In one of Ambrosius's hymns it is said that the word became flesh by reason of a mystical aspiration without

the seal of Mary's virginity being broken.[15] It is perhaps this hymn which has occasioned the change in the recently quoted Latin song, which in a collection of Italian scourging chants reads as follows:—

Gaude, Virgo, Mater Christi
Quae per *flamen* concepisti,
Gabriele nuntio.[16]

An old legend, which in its earliest form is found in the writings of the oriental heretic Bardesanes, actually describes what happened at this kind of Incarnation. Gabriel, we are told, "with one finger lifted Mary's tunic and breathed upon her bosom. In the same moment the Virgin knew that a life had awakened in her womb."[17] Just as the idea of a conception through the word could, at any rate partially, be derived from a too materialistic interpretation of the philosophical doctrine of the *logos*, so also the idea of the fertilising breath was supported by a misunderstanding of what the Bible says about the Holy *Spirit*. We think of such an influence of language over thought when we read in S. Birgitta's visions of how Jesus explains Mary's motherhood: "For in truth my mother was a virgin and a mother. She had not become a mother through connection with a man, but she was inflated by my father's and my breath."[18]

However important results the misunderstanding of words and ideas may have brought about in this and so many other connections, yet it is not in them that we have to look for the first cause of the mystical views of God's incarnation. The source both of the apocryphal and of the canonical narrative is that ancient popular superstition from which so many elements in Christian tradition can be derived. Thus the notion that the wind, the air, and the breath can bring about fertilisation

both in men and animals is a frequently recurring "Völkergedanke," which we are not surprised to recognise in the line "quae per flamen concepisti."[19] Another idea, likewise universal, which has already been mentioned in the chapter on S. Anne, appears in an old Italian lauda, according to which the Incarnation was brought about by the angel giving Mary the palm-branch and a sweet-smelling fruit.[20] Flowers and fruits have, in legends, often made virgins into mothers. Therefore it even seems probable that the green and blossoming branch which artists placed in Gabriel's hand has often been regarded—in accordance with the popular point of view—not as a symbol of virginity, but as a means of procuring a pure motherhood.

The belief in the magical effects of fruits, flowers, and scents is, however, like all other superstitions, of a folklorist rather than an aesthetic interest. For the history of the poetic idea it does not much matter in which more or less peculiar way God is thought to have joined Himself to His human mother. The essential thing is that the Incarnation—whether it was a sound that passed through her ear, or a scent that was breathed in, or whether the Highest Himself "kam durch beslossen Porte"—allowed Mary to remain as inviolably virginal as before. The actual course of the mystic fertilisation has not of course admitted of direct description. The pious visionaries have, indeed, thought that they perceived how Mary received the Highest into her womb with joy—thus S. Birgitta hears the Virgin relate how "at these words my Son was immediately conceived in my womb with indescribable joy to my soul and all my body"[21]—and they have pictured in their imagination how the three persons in the Godhead betook themselves in solemn procession from Heaven to

Solomon's new Temple, *i.e.* the Virgin's bosom, in which for nine months the Son was pleased to take up His abode.[22] In poems and sermons, however, such accounts of the connection between God and the human body, which in their minute circumstantiality are quite bizarre, are seldom to be found. When treating of the Incarnation mystery, the poetry of the Church has tactfully enough employed a symbolic method of expression. The Conception has been explained by the help of similes referring to natural phenomena, in which men thought they saw some analogy to fertilisation. Such a metaphorical notion must indeed offer itself almost unconsciously to the religious mind.

If, as can easily be understood, the Incarnation was a subject to be handled with caution so long as the earthly mother and the embodied God were regarded as two human beings, the motive lost its delicate character as soon as the mother and Son were looked upon as representing great universal ideas. That which was incarnated at the Conception appeared indeed to the religious imagination as a separate visible figure, but at the same time it embraced a whole world of ideas which are not easily connected with any anthropomorphic shape. In relation to mankind, God represented what is great, high, and supernatural; all that is separated by the firmament and the space thereunder from the earth, was His kingdom. When the imagination looked for sights which combined what was sublime in His being, it found them in the great spectacle of the heavens—in the clouds, the sky, the sun, or in the blue vault itself.

The contrasted being, again, who at the Incarnation was for the first and only time united by a miracle with its opposite, was for its part typical of a wide circle of

ideas. "Mankind against God" might be changed into the antithesis "earth against heaven." Mary was the highest human being, the purest and most perfect creature born of the race of Eve, and accordingly the whole of earthly creation was included in the person of her who was called to meet the Creator Himself. She stood for the sea, the earth, and the fields just as He who became her Son represented the sky and all that had its place beyond. Thus it was something more than a union of two personalities that was consummated at Gabriel's greeting to Mary. Not only were two biologically incompatible principles united at the moment when virginity and motherhood met for the first time, but a cosmic miracle took place, for two kingdoms which had been separated by all space were blended when heaven and earth became one in Mary's womb.

The idea of a marriage between the earth and the sky is one of those "folk-thoughts" which are met with even in the lower races, and which recur time after time in myth and legend. That this thought became associated with the Incarnation was all the more natural since the Annunciation was celebrated just at the break of spring, when the earth is warmed by the proximity of the sun. The *Ave* too had, according to a prevalent Catholic belief, been uttered at sunset, when the light of heaven seemed to unite itself on the horizon with earth. It is not surprising, therefore, that mediaeval preachers often explain the mystery of the Incarnation in terms that refer to natural phenomena. "The heaven sinks down, and the earth rises"—this is how the Annunciation is described in Cornelius a Lapide's collection of commentaries;[28] and Heinrich von Loufenberg sings in similar terms of "die Wunder der Menschwerdung Gottes":—

Sich het har ab gebogen
der himel zu der erd,
der umbkreis ist gesmogen
ein einen punct gezogen
in einer maget werd.[24]

That Heaven bowed down to earth was a thing which had never happened, and which, just because it was inconceivable, emphasised the miraculous element in the union of the opposites, God and man. For the same reasons, however, the comparison could not contribute to *explain* the great paradox of religion; but there was another approach of the firmament to the earth that could often be actually observed. When the sky descended and emptied itself in rain, it was as if heaven had connected itself with earth; and the connection was fruitful, for the crops of the field blossomed forth after the downfall. The moisture of the clouds had begotten the vegetation. Such an idea, as is well known, has been at the root of many mythologies. Among all people whose life depended upon cornfields and pasturage, the clouds, the rain, and the dew have been good deities.

It was easy for Christian writers who inherited their supply of similes from the Old Testament to represent the Incarnation under the image of a cloud which let its fertilising rain fall upon the ground. According to the Yahvist story of the Creation it was, indeed, the rain that made the earth fruitful. The barren, sterile tracts in Canaan, Syria, and North Mesopotamia had taught the Jews, and those nations from which they borrowed their ideas about the world, to regard moisture as the type of all wealth.[25] In the Psalms, as in the Prophets, the rain and the dew are continually used as images of blessing. God's wrath expressed itself in sending a

drought on those who had not listened to His commands, but His favour sent rain upon the faithful, and His mildness sank down like a soft dew over the field.[26] These agricultural similes are used also, in a derived meaning, to express all the spiritual effects of the pleasure or displeasure of the Highest. We read that the heart which has turned from God is dry and barren like an unfruitful field; but the answering of prayer and grace are a heavenly dew which sinks down over the mind to purify and refresh it. In this respect the earliest fathers follow the terminology of the Jewish writers; and the similes of the cloud, the dew, and the rain are continually used by mediaeval scholastics and mystics, no less than by modern pious writers, from Santa Theresa and Bunyan down to the modern preachers.[27]

Those authors who possessed an independent imagination have naturally known how to introduce a new meaning into the old metaphors, or to deepen their meaning by their manner of drawing the comparisons. The imitators, on the other hand, employ them quite mechanically, just as signs are employed in a prearranged cipher. They are certain of being understood, for the meteorological phenomena have all received time-honoured and definite meanings. The downpour of the heavens represents in conventional Catholic symbolism the Word of God and the divine grace and mercy. The clouds represent the prophets and apostles who go forth over the world to illumine mankind with their shining light, to frighten them with their thunders, and to comfort them with the rain of their mild words.[28] But the cloud also, and with much greater reason, stands for a covering for the God who hovered above the earth, and the rain is an

image of the highest gift of His mercy, which descended upon mankind in the Incarnation.

That Mary should receive her place in this system of similes is a natural consequence of the symbolism in which her being was expressed. As has already been mentioned, in contrast to the Divinity she represents the barren earth as opposed to the fertilising Heaven; but in her virginity she was also a flower which needed refreshing by the dews of heaven in order to unfold. In her beauty she was a garden that would have withered up had not heaven sent its dew; and in her chastity she was, as the fathers expressed it in an agricultural simile, "a field unfurrowed by any cultivation, which gave a harvest when it was watered by the rain."[29] All the Bible passages in which the blessing of rain is spoken of won a new meaning, therefore, when placed in connection with the Holy Virgin.

Thus, to take one example out of many, a prophecy about Mary and her Child was seen in Isaiah's often quoted verses about the "cloud that should rain justice": "Drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it" (Isaiah xlv. 8). As originally written, this text did not indeed admit of any application to the mystery of the Incarnation, but the Vulgate had introduced so many personifications of ideas in its rendering, that no great effort was needed to see in it a prognostication of the conception of the Divine Man: "Rorate, coeli, desuper, et nubes pluant Justum: aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem, et justitia oriatur simul: ego Dominus creavi eum." The ground that was to open was interpreted as Mary's womb, and the harvest that

was to spring from the virginal mother-earth was the Saviour Himself, with whose birth justice was to go forth over the world. In the clouds it would be most natural to see an abode for the Highest, from whose being the incarnate Son was sent forth. They have, however, in accordance with the time-honoured symbolism, also been explained in this connection as referring to the prophets and preachers who, with the rain of their word, foretold the Saviour's advent.

The prophecies in Hosea vi. 3 and xiv. 5 could be interpreted on the same principle: "His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth"—"I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." In the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, which is not included in Protestant Bibles, there were also some verses that could be spontaneously applied to Mary: "Dixi: Rogabo hortum meum plantationum, et inebriabo prati mei fructum" (xxiv. 42). The garden, we are told in Cornelius a Lapide's exposition, is Mary; He who waters the garden is God, and the water is His grace, which is outpoured over Mary.[80] When once such a method of interpretation was recognised, it was naturally possible to decipher references to the Incarnation mystery in all those Bible passages in which there is mention of the blessings of moisture, dew, and rain.[81]

There is no need to summarise here the different chapters and verses which can thus be taken to support the doctrine of the Virgin's miraculous motherhood, but it is necessary to pause over a certain story in the Book of Judges which has given rise to one of the most peculiar symbols of Mary in art and poetry.

It is related of Gideon that, when he was made

judge of his people, he demanded a sign in order to be convinced that God favoured his intent (Judges vi. 36-40). "And Gideon said unto God: If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and if it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow and thrust the fleece together and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thy anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew upon all the ground."

This narrative has not been left unutilised by those interpreters who searched the Old Testament for prophesies of coming events in the Church's history. Thus Augustine has given it an ingenious meaning which has been brought forward by many authors after him. The dew that fell upon the fleece but allowed the earth to remain dry, was, it was said, Christ who descended to the Jews to redeem them; but as the Jews rejected His message, the dew at the second trial left the wool untouched and moistened instead the fields of the heathen. The gift of Heaven was in this explanation compared with the incarnate God.[32] Mary had as yet no place in the simile. However, Ambrosius, Augustine's contemporary, was able to find something in Gideon's miracle applicable to her.[33] Indeed, nothing was more natural than to see in the fleece, which was moistened by the clouds of the sky, a symbol of

the virgin womb; and when once this association of ideas had arisen, a further reference to Mary could be found in the sixth verse of the seventy-second psalm.[84] For the Vulgate, like the older Protestant translations, renders the word "mown grass,"[85] which occurs in this verse, by the word "vellus" or fleece: "He shall come down like rain upon the fleece, and like dropping dew upon the fields."

In a number of commentaries, attention was paid only to that explanation of the miraculous motherhood which Gideon's first trial had offered. The mystery of the dew, which no one can observe in its fall, was connected with the mystery of the Virgin's conception. In its Annunciation office, the liturgy adopted the Psalmist's old simile, "sicut pluvia in vellus descendisti," and devotional literature commented in detail on the import of the comparison. Thus we read in the *Jungfru Marie örtagård* that the Holy Ghost came to the Virgin secretly as the dew, whose falling no one can observe.[86] The fact, again, that the mild falling of the dew could not hurt the soft wool, offered a comparison with the divine fertilisation which left Mary's virginity intact. Thus John, the monk of Salzburg, sung in his poem *Uterus virgineus*:—

Verse 4. Als die woll fäucht wart
von des hymels towe,
Also empfieng in käuscher art
die edel jungkfrawe.
Noch das fel nye wart versert
von dem regen suesse.
Also wart maidleich zucht erwert
in des engels gruesse.[87]

Here, as in the preceding example, apparently nothing is said about the earth being moistened by dew at the second trial, while the fleece lay dry upon the threshing

floor. On the other hand, Hugo de S. Victor says, slightly modifying Augustine's ancient interpretation, that the earth may be regarded on this occasion as a symbol of the Church. The Virgin, he thinks, was indeed the first to be gladdened by God's grace, but after her, the community of the faithful, which extends over all the world, had its share of the heavenly dew.[38] Other authors have succeeded in placing the miracle of the second night in a still closer connection with Madonna symbolism. Just as the fleece, *i.e.* Mary, absorbed the moisture of the air while the surrounding earth was dry, so she alone remained untouched while all the ground was drenched in dew. This thought is expressed in a hymn in the office for Notre Dame de Lourdes :—

Dum torret arescens humus,
Tu rore sola spargeris ;
Tellure circum rorida,
Intacta sola permanes.[39]

It is hardly too audacious to suppose that the dew in this hymn was understood in two opposite ways—first as a symbol of grace and then as a symbol of sin.[40] By such a departure from the time-honoured interpretation, it has been possible to see in Gideon's miracle a prognostication of the two sides of Mary's being—that is to say, the first miracle refers to her supernatural motherhood, while the second sets forth her unique virginity.

The result of all these expositions has been that the fleece in the Book of Judges has become one of the most frequent symbols of the Madonna. "Vellus Gedeonis" is never left out in the enumeration of epithets glorifying the Virgin in the litanies. When the emblems of Mary were represented in art, it was never omitted to give a place by the shut gate, the enclosed garden and

the lofty tower, to that miraculous fleece, which by its moisture and its dryness indicated the Madonna's motherhood and virginity. Often, as for example in a Madonna picture at Nystad, in Finland, Gideon himself was represented kneeling before the fleece,[41] for the old Jewish judge was a type of all Christian knights, whose foremost duty was the worship and service of the Madonna. As the first man who had seen a miracle which foreshadowed Mary's virgin-motherhood, he became a patron of the brotherhood of the Golden Fleece — that high and famous knightly Order which made the "Vellus Gedeonis" of Jewish legend as famous as the fleece of Colchis.

Thus, in the treatment of the symbolism of rain by theologians and poets, we find many traits corresponding to the common popular superstition that the moisture of the sky can fructify not only the earth but also human beings. Indeed it is probable that the story of the Saviour's incarnation was originally influenced by ancient myths as to virgins who had given birth to children from being exposed to rain or dew. As met with in Church poetry, however, the symbols have no immediate connection with the popular ideas of magic. They are used, it must be presumed, for a purely literary purpose as a means of explaining and visualising a miracle which in itself is considered to be too unfathomable to be penetrated by thought. However great or little may be their value in illustrating theological dogmas, they have at any rate poetically fulfilled an important function. That old and popular world philosophy, which the poems unintentionally recall to our memory, gives a mythic greatness to the theological dogma. We seem to recognise the agricultural symbolism of the legends of Osiris and Demeter

when we read the series of similes in which Ephraim Syrus epitomised the life-career of the incarnate God: "He poured out His dew and His living rain over Mary, the thirsting earth. As the corn sinks into the ground, so He descended under the ground. But He arose like the sheaf and the new crop."[42] One thinks of all those "sons of the rain" in the American traditions of Montezuma, when one reads of the Virgin, a "virga fertilis" who became "fecunda coeli rore." Even if one overlooks all the mythological and folklorist parallels, the religious narrative acquires a poetical tone through the nature pictures by the help of which it is explained. How effective is not that comparison of the mystery of the Incarnation with the invisible fall of the dew? Mary, says Ambrosius, took the Divinity into her entire being like a mild dew, without her virginity suffering any loss."[43] In old Swedish verse the same thought is expressed in the poem "Vår frus pina":—

Som eit blit regn tha kom han nidhr
then signadha jomfru tok han widhr.[44]

Mechthild von Magdeburg, the German seeress, develops the simile with some fresh details:—

Der süsze Thau der unbeginnenden Dreifaltigkeit
Ergosz sich aus dem Quell der Gottheit
In der auserwählten Jungfrau Reinigkeit
Und dieser Blume Frucht ist Gott der unsterbliche.[45]

Splendid as this piling up of attributes may appear, the great mystery has been still more beautifully described in a little English song from the time of Henry VI.:—

He came also still
Where His mother was,
As dew in April
That falls on the grass.

He came also still
To His mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falls on the flower.

He came also still
Where His mother lay,
As dew in April
That falls on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never one but she.
Well may such a lady
God's mother be.[46]

It was impossible for pictorial art to illustrate all the import of thoughts and emotions expressed in Annunciation poems. In the nature of the case, the invisible fall of the dew could not be portrayed but only described. Again, the effect which the mild rain might have produced in the compositions had probably not been appreciated by art-lovers in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, who placed the clear sunny air foremost among all atmospheric phenomena. Painting could, indeed, suggest what the symbols had to explain. Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi, for example, could well express the stillness of the great mystery; but if it was required to give a picture of the mystic event, then natural phenomena were unserviceable as subjects for representation. Painters and sculptors preferred to illustrate the more naïve, but at the same time more graphic view, according to which God at the Incarnation descended to the Virgin in human shape.

Such representations are found as early as in the first centuries. In the great mosaic at S. Maria Maggiore, which is thought to date from the fifth century, we see above the Madonna a floating angel, and opposite it a dove, *i.e.* the Holy Ghost, who flies

down towards the Virgin's head. Gabriel stands by Mary's side, with his right hand raised in the conventional gesture of speaking.[47] It is conceivable that the two angel-figures both represent Gabriel during different moments in his course towards earth. (As has been earlier mentioned, successive moments were often represented in one picture.) According to such an interpretation, the dove might refer to what would happen when the promise of the announcing angel had been fulfilled; but if in this case it is uncertain whether the Incarnation was regarded as simultaneous with the Annunciation, there can be no doubt that in later art the two events were represented, in harmony with the dogmatic teaching, as standing in immediate connection with one another.

Taddeo di Bartolo and Simone Martini have exactly illustrated in their compositions the process described by the Church's poets and dogmatists. We see how Gabriel's words of greeting, printed in gold, extend from his mouth to Mary's ear, as if to open a way for God's Incarnation. At the Virgin's ear terminates another golden beam, which has its starting-point at the uppermost edge of the picture, where Simone Martini painted a group of seraphs, and Taddeo di Bartolo a floating Saviour surrounded by seraphs.[48] Along this shining way the dove of the Holy Spirit descends towards the Madonna. There are, indeed, not many pictures which thus make two lines meet in the Virgin's ear, but the stream of light which proceeds from heaven to the Madonna is seldom missing in representations of the Annunciation. Unimportant variations were introduced into the motive, but the fundamental thought itself was maintained unaltered.

During the early Renaissance, it was usually from a

picture of the Saviour that the golden ray issued. Later it was often preferred to represent God the Father Himself, instead of the Son. Piero dei Franceschi, Lorenzo Lotto, Antoniazzo Romano, Mariotto Albertinelli,[49] and others portrayed an old man who, from the clouds, stretched forth his hands towards earth. In some pictures—by Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi, for example—the *hand* alone, as a *pars pro toto*, has served to represent the divine figure;[50] whereas Benedetto Bonfigli, again, in harmony with the idea of the Incarnation of the Word, makes the golden beam issue from God the Father's mouth.[51] A German glass-painting has gone still further in realism by placing a tube in God's hand, through which He blows forth His spirit over Mary.[52] In contrast to these naïvely graphic pictures we have compositions, such as those of Crivelli and Andrea del Sarto, in which the dove and the golden line descend not from any human figure, but from a cloud in the sky.[53] Finally, in Titian's Annunciation, at Treviso, all the anthropomorphic and symbolic elements have been abandoned. The light, as in a faithful landscape painting, streams in rays upon Mary from a sun hidden behind a dark cloud.

The actual union between God and Mary is represented, as has been said, by a dove descending upon the Virgin's head. In a number of compositions the dove appears independent and alone, *i.e.* without its path being indicated by any ray of light, and without a picture of God the Father who sends it forth. Some artists, again, have given the entire Trinity a place in their pictures, with the dove a little way from the Virgin's ear, the Father in a cloud in Heaven, and the Saviour in the middle between the two. The Son is represented as a little suckling, who glides or runs

down to His earthly mother. He is often a stout "putto," who, with easy grace, bears a great cross on his shoulder.[54] As illustrations to the mystical view of the solemn procession of the Trinity to "Solomon's new Temple," these pictures are of an exquisite naïveté. Unfortunately, orthodox theology has had no conception of their charm. On the contrary, the figure of the little boy has caused the dogmatists many misgivings. They saw in it a revival of an old heresy which the Church had thought already overcome. For the view that God descended to earth in bodily form was a confirmation of Eutyches' old teaching, that the Saviour's human nature came from heaven and was not formed in the Virgin's body. It was, therefore, a natural anxiety for the defence of true doctrine that drove Benedict XIV. to forbid, with the might of his papal authority, all representations of the Second Person in pictures of the Annunciation.[55]

To summarise the results of our inquiries in this chapter, many different theories of the Incarnation mystery come to view in the treatment of the Virgin's Annunciation in art and poetry; but certain essential features are common to all the varying representations. Ever since the fourth century—if not earlier—it has been held that in one way or another the spark of life descended into the Madonna's womb at the moment when Gabriel pronounced his greeting. By this supernatural fertilisation, according to the dogma common to all Christian creeds, Mary's absolute virginity was in no way affected. Moreover, the miracle by which she was transformed into a mother was one which could not even disturb or frighten her. It confirmed the messenger's word that she need not fear what would happen to her. In strained, but often poetical and apposite interpretations, the Catholic theologians and poets sought to show how mildly and

quietly was accomplished that great work, by which the laws of nature were broken and the irreconcilable opposites of thought united with one another. The light fall of the dew was commonly cited in explanation of the Virgin fertilisation, but this was only one of the similes by which the Conception of God was illustrated.

The remaining symbols of the Incarnation, however, have all been applied also to the virginal childbirth, and they will therefore be treated in connection with that event, which availed as little as the Incarnation to disturb even the anatomical virginity of Mary. At this point of our investigation there is only one circumstance to which attention may be directed, viz. the fact that at the actual moment of Annunciation the earthly woman was transformed into a tabernacle for the Highest. Her body became, to use a pious expression, a lantern that shone and shimmered with beauty from the moment that God was enclosed in it.[56] All that was prepared by her miraculous conception and during her pure and virginal youth is fulfilled in the Incarnation. With this event begins a new period in Mary's life, during which she is not only the purest of human beings, but also something far more than a human being.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VISITATION

Abrázase la Madre milagrosa
De Cristo con la madre soberana,
De su profeta Juan; la niña hermosa
Virgen, con la casada vieja, anciana;
La espina seca con la bella rosa,
La bianca nieve con la roja grana,
Pone de amor dulcisima coyunda
La fertil Sara á la Raquel fecunda.

ESCOBAR Y MENDOZA,
Historia de la Virgen Madre de Dios, Canto xiv.

IN the theological commentaries which have been summarised in the preceding pages, the Church's view of the Annunciation has been by no means exhaustively treated, for it has not been our intention to present a complete account of all the symbolical thoughts associated by pious devotion with the meeting of Gabriel and Mary. So far as art and poetry are concerned with the actual message of the angel, nothing more need be said. There is, however, one detail in Annunciation pictures which points to subsequent events in the Madonna's life, and which is therefore worthy of a few remarks in this chapter; for the expressions of politeness exchanged between Mary and her heavenly guest have given rise to some remarkable interpretations.

Since the sacred history, in each of its chapters, affords a pattern for human life, the high messenger's visit to Mary must also have had a more dignified

character than any earthly visit. The Virgin, as appears from the poems about her childhood, was modest and courteous in all her bearing. It is natural, therefore, that artists often made her bow in humble welcome to the angel. Gabriel, again, belonged to the heavenly circle, the "himmelska herrskapit"—to use S. Birgitta's expression—in whose social life courtesy was supposed to have reached perfection. It is inconceivable, therefore, that he would not have bowed profoundly on entering Mary's room. Further, the greetings of the angel and the Virgin were based not merely on common politeness. Mary did homage to Gabriel as God's messenger; and he humbled himself before her who had been preferred before all others to serve the purpose of the Highest. Again, they were both bowed to the ground in veneration of the mystery which was announced. It is thus easy to understand the numerous paintings and sculptures in which Gabriel and Mary kneel opposite one another. The religious import of the motive is beautifully set forth in these pious compositions, which are devotional both in subject and aim; and such a disposition is, from the purely pictorial standpoint, uniquely effective. The Tuscan sculptors in terra-cotta had an eye for it when they represented in their "lunetté" reliefs Gabriel and Mary kneeling and stretching their slender figures towards one another in an arch over the flowering lily.[1]

There are, however, many compositions in which the position of Gabriel and Mary cannot be explained merely as expressing devotion and mutual courtesy. The Virgin is represented in these pictures as standing or sitting, and Gabriel kneels in humble homage which seems to be directed neither to God nor to the mystery, but to Mary herself.[2] According to the pious view, such

a grouping is just as correct as the disposition of two kneeling figures. The angel, it is said, worships Mary, because he sees in her, even now, a tabernacle of the Incarnate God;[8] and the Virgin can accept Gabriel's homage without lack of humility because the Highest has been united with her being. Thus, in order to justify those pictures in which Gabriel alone bows to the ground, it has only to be pointed out that it is not the Annunciation itself that is illustrated, but rather the Incarnation which took place simultaneously with it.

We do not mean to assert, however, that the artists made this distinction clear to themselves when they represented Gabriel's visit to Mary. It was probably no dogmatic tendency which led Piero dei Franceschi—in S. Francesco at Arezzo—to make of Mary a mighty queen, who in majestic pride stands high and untouched when Gabriel remains kneeling at her threshold. On the other hand, it is indisputable that a definite theological point of view can be introduced into such representations; and what interests us is that in Piero dei Franceschi's fresco, for example, we seem to see how the Virgin's figure has been penetrated at the Incarnation by a dignity which sharply contrasts with the modest grace of the Virgin of the Presentation and the Annunciation pictures.

The first chapters in the Madonna's history offered to artists and poets, as well as to theological writers, motives for an ideal description of childhood. According to this description, Mary is a young virgin, or rather a little girl who unites in herself all childhood's grace and innocence. Protected in the secluded rooms of the Temple and fed by angels, she grows up

like a white dove—a little female Nazarite, whom nothing of the world's impurity has had the chance to defile. Such an innocent child was she when she was given by the Temple priests into the care of the aged Joseph, as a foster-daughter rather than as a wife; and she was just as innocent a child still, when one evening at sunset she was surprised by the greeting of the announcing angel.

When the Incarnation was accomplished, Mary did not lose an atom of her purity. The charm of innocence rests upon her being now as before; but that trait of gay graciousness is, if not extinguished, at any rate overshadowed by other more prominent qualities. The woman who became the Mother of God could indeed remain a virgin, but she could not, from any point of view—either religious or poetic—remain a child. She is mystically wedded to the Highest. The child Mary gives place to the queen of earthly creation; the little girl who had so lately sung and danced in God's Temple becomes the Mother, who will experience the highest pride of all mothers and live through their deepest sorrow. Her person no longer calls forth the kindly, and therefore to a certain degree superior, admiration accorded to prettiness and charm; but she compels reverence by reason of the calling to which she has been consecrated.

To a reverence of this kind, according to the Catholic view, Mary makes claim, more than at any other time, during the period before she gives birth to her child, *i.e.* while she still carries the Highest in her womb. As long as her being is connected in this physical sense with God, she partakes of all the worship with which mankind approaches Him. It is in her character of God-bearer that she achieves her greatness, and it is

from this character that all her other dignities can be logically derived. The same stately simile was applied to Mary as was used for the Monstrance, when it was said, repeating the verse from the Psalms: "He made the sun to be His tabernacle"—"in sole posuit tabernaculum suum."[4] Her body was glorified as the abode in which God had for nine months been pleased to dwell, and numerous metaphors were invented which varied the idea that she was a receptacle for the greatest and highest of all conceivable contents.[5] In this way the shrine became a subject for religious poetry, and Mary, as a shrine, was adorned with poetic epithets, which were often as precious as the jewels and the fine metals on the reliquaries.

The delight with which pious imagination played round the thought of the Madonna as a shrine appears from the fact that, in spite of the delicacy of the subject, it was attempted to embody the idea even in pictorial art. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in particular, the divine embryo was often portrayed in the Virgin's body in representations of the Annunciation and the visit, and of the Madonna alone. In pictures, the tender figure was painted on the outside of Mary's dress, or it was represented by the letters J.H.S. enclosed by a halo. In sculpture, again, with the greater realism permitted by the technique, a little window was inserted in Mary's body, through which one could look into the sacred room where the Son slept like a human embryo.[6] Sometimes instead of this one Person, the whole Trinity has been represented in the Virgin's womb, in illustration of the hymns in which Mary is invoked as "totius trinitatis . . . nobile triclinium."[7] There were also fashioned many wooden figures of the Madonna, the front of which could be opened like a

book and the inner walls of which were adorned with pictures from the sacred history.[8] By these ingenious works of sculpture a clear expression was given to the thought that the entire life of the Saviour and the entire redemption of mankind were hidden in their germs in Mary.

While it was thus asserted that, during the period when she bore the Highest in her womb, the Madonna was raised to equality with God, on the other hand it was never omitted to notice the features by which the Virgin's life at this time corresponded or contrasted with that of earthly women. Mary is a new Eve, who has been purified from all the heaviness and earthliness which cleaves to the race by reason of the first mother's fall. It is therefore natural that she who in her childhood and youth is the perfect Virgin, and who at the Annunciation accepts with bridal modesty the Incarnation, in order to be rendered fruitful by the Highest in the purest way conceivable, should also afford the world a glorified picture of that condition which, for all earthly women, is connected with pain, sickness, and oppression of soul. It was not enough that such a view could be deduced by analogy; men thought that in Luke's narrative of how Mary "arose in those days and went into the hill country *with haste*," they had found a clear proof that she was not inconvenienced by her condition. The Church writers seem to have overlooked the fact that even according to the freest interpretation it would be impossible to place the visit to Elizabeth long after the Annunciation, and they have described the Virgin's visit to her kinswoman as if it had taken place at a much later date. Unlike all other women in her position, they say, she was not weighed down by what she carried, but lightened by it. She was

healthy and joyful throughout the time when she bore the bearer of all things in her womb.[9] As a specific proof of her health, Richard de S. Laurent cites the statement that she could *hasten* over the mountain to Elizabeth.[10] S. Bernard expresses himself with greater caution, for he does not suppose that it could as yet have been inconvenient to her to walk, but he points out, as something peculiar to Mary, the fact that she made the journey in a joyful mood. "It is a great thing," says he, "to be a virgin, but it is in all respects a far greater thing to be a virgin in spite of one's motherhood. Rightly was she, who alone had conceived her child without sin and lust, released from the heavy tedium by which all other wives are afflicted. Therefore, in the beginning, when other mothers are most oppressed, she could hasten up the mountains, full of joy, to help Elizabeth."[11]

The swiftness of Mary's walking, which was interpreted as an expression of a joyful state of mind, has often been set forth in Catholic commentaries even after S. Bernard's time. It is also significant that, in the office for the festival of the Visitation, there were introduced the verses from the Song of Solomon concerning the lover who hastens to his beloved (ii. 8, 9): "Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart."[12] In a Visitation hymn from Spain it is told how even nature partakes in Mary's gladness, and the mountains rejoice at the approach of God :—

Hierusalem in montana
adit virgo virginum,
Ferens utero latentem
Jesum Christum Dominum.
Plaudunt montes exsultantes
a conspectu numinum.[13]

These thoughts have been further embellished by modern authors, who describe how Mary walks unwearied over the mountains, and hastens forward without any need of rest: "The grass rejoices under her feet, the flowers spring up, and mountains and hills are glad when she draws nigh."[14] As Faber puts it,[15] and as Führich painted it in his picture at Vienna, she is accompanied by angels, "who shield the living Ark of the Covenant, and worship the Lord of the world, who is hidden in His Temple."

Catholic art and poetry, however, have only in exceptional cases treated of the actual journey to Elizabeth. It is the meeting of the two future mothers which has given rise to theological interpretation and aesthetic representation. To the pious mind this moment must appear to be above all others fraught with mystic significance. As has been pointed out, Elizabeth's motherhood was a foreshadowing and a confirmation of Mary's supernatural union with God. The miracle of the Old Testament—a barren woman who will bear a child—meets in the Visitation the miracle of the New Covenant: a girl who becomes a mother and nevertheless remains a virgin. Elizabeth represents the tradition by which the future is connected with the past; and she is all the better suited for this rôle because she is a woman of the tribe of Levi, who has grown up close to the Temple mysteries and who has become wife of the High Priest. It was, we are told, this familiarity of hers with holy objects that led her to receive Mary with meek submissiveness. She understood that it was a new Ark of the Covenant that had crossed the threshold of her home and that wrung from her those expressions of veneration and worship with which she—the first of all earthly beings—recognised the divinity of Mary's Child.[16]

By means of such ingenious, albeit far-fetched combinations of thought, the Visitation could be made an inexhaustible subject of religious meditation, but to art also this motive offered an attractive and profitable task. The Annunciation pictures show that rich and varying effects could be attained by the representation of two figures bowing to one another in mutual reverence. In the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth a similar exchange of greetings has to be rendered, but here it is not two slender and youthful bodies that graciously lean towards one another. Elizabeth is bent with age, and Mary is usually portrayed—with the same departure from the gospel narrative that marks the literary treatment of the Visitation—in a condition of indubitable pregnancy.[17] On the other hand, the greeting between the two kinswomen is naturally conceived of as more familiar than that between the Virgin and the heavenly messenger. Mary and Elizabeth often join in a sisterly embrace, so tender that "sacri junguntur uteri," as Johannes a Jenstein describes it in the frank language of a religious hymn.[18] The actual gesture is in many compositions the same as in the pictures of the meeting at the "golden gate," but the effect is different by reason of the contrast between the figures of the young and the old woman. Further, the subject has permitted of many variations both in the treatment of the *milieu* and in the choice of the moment most suitable for representation.

The meeting of Mary and Elizabeth is not among the subjects treated by the art of the first centuries. In certain old sculptures and carvings of the fifth and sixth centuries critics have indeed thought they recognised this motive, but, at any rate in the case

of some of these works, the interpretation is doubtful.[19] The stone workers of the Romanesque period, on the other hand, delighted to introduce the figures of the coming mothers on the Temple doors. As expressed by their faulty technique, the motive could not attain to any outer beauty. Thus an absolutely grotesque effect is produced on the façade of the bishop's palace at Fano, where we see two coarse thick-set women pressed against each other, while the elder of them places her broad hand on the waist of the younger, as if to assure herself of her condition.[20] If sculptures of this kind have mainly an archaeological interest, it is on the other hand a great and lofty art that appears in the noble figures of Mary and Elizabeth on the doors of the cathedrals of northern France.[21] There is also beauty of line and expressive composition in many of the numerous and nameless representations of the Visitation, which are to be found on the walls of small French country chapels as well as in the great cathedrals. Where, as is usually the case, the meeting of the two kinswomen constitutes a link in a series of sculptures of the sacred story, Mary and Elizabeth have sometimes been placed in two different but adjacent compartments of the great image series. The pious women lean towards one another over a pilaster, which marks the transition from an earlier division to a later. By this we are reminded that the Visitation betokens a connection between new and old, an *enjambement*, one might say, by means of which, without disturbing its rhythm, the narrative enters upon a new chapter.

In Renaissance painting the motive has given rise to many different renderings. Partly in order to give greater variety to the description, partly the better to fill up the given space, subordinate characters were often

introduced; and it does not constitute a departure from the Bible narrative to represent Mary and Elizabeth as accompanied by some serving-women. Painters have even been defended for giving a place, as they sometimes did, in pictures of the Visitation to Joseph, who witnessed the holy meeting at a distance.[22] These details serve to make the story entertaining to the spectator, but it also easily gained a worldly character which could not well be harmonised with the mystical import of the subject. In the frescoes and pictures of Ghirlandajo, Carpaccio, and Sebastian del Piombo,[23] the Biblical text has only served as a pretext for gorgeous paintings of a young woman's visit to an elderly friend.

In purely ecclesiastical works of art, on the other hand, everything has been avoided that might give the composition an impression of ordinary everyday life. The number of subsidiary characters has been limited, or Mary and Elizabeth occupy the whole canvas. They have been represented in an environment that has been defined as little as possible: in an open place, in the shadow of trees, or in the vaulted passage of a gateway, framing with its mighty arch the smaller arch which is formed by the shapes of the two women.[24] The transference of the figures to an ideal *milieu* makes it all the more clear that it is a mystery and not an historic event which is portrayed, and by the position and expression of the persons, the artists have succeeded in revealing a good deal of the meaning concealed by the motive. The Madonna moves with the dignity of a queen. She knows that she bears the Highest; she is not indeed haughty, but she feels that pride which finds expression in her hymn, "Magnificat anima mea Deum." She is a child compared with her aged friend, but she

receives Elizabeth's homage with the calmness of a superior. Elizabeth's posture is equally speaking. She raises her furrowed face to Mary with an expression in which reverence seems to mingle with the sympathy of an experienced woman, who knows that motherhood means pain. As Giotto painted this scene in his frescoes at Padua, the Visitation becomes an ideal picture of affection combined with admiring homage.

It was usual during the earlier Renaissance to portray the two women as two figures of an equal height in an erect position, an arrangement which still appears in Carpaccio. Later, on the other hand, it was attempted to show Mary's superiority by making her taller than Elizabeth. Giotto makes the aged woman bow to her young guest, and the later painters accentuate the subordination of Elizabeth still more. Thus the same development can be observed in pictures of the Visitation as in the Annunciation pictures. Just as the artists, in order to emphasise the importance of the Incarnation, even made the angel Gabriel kneel to Mary, so they let Elizabeth sink to the earth at the Madonna's feet. In such an act the aged woman is represented in Ghirlandajo's Visitation in the Louvre, in Sodoma's picture in the Oratory of S. Bernardino at Siena, and in Andrea—or Luca?—della Robbia's monumental sculpture in S. Giovanni Fuorcivitas at Pistoja.

The Visitation has served still better than the Annunciation as a model of that courtesy of demeanour on which such great weight is laid in the Catholic philosophy of life. Just as the Mass doctrine, with its strict demands for purity and dignity, gave rise to a pious etiquette, so an ideal of social politeness has been derived from the ideas of the Madonna's person and

life. In the Catholic view, that outer courtesy which gives charm to men's mutual contact is not an unessential social convention, but a virtue issuing from heaven; and the patterns of this virtue heaven gave to earth when Gabriel visited Mary, and when the youthful Virgin, who had been raised over all creation, gladly hastened to her aged kinswoman, to assist her who so humbly received God's elect.[25] This idea has been naïvely expressed in an English motto of the fifteenth century, designed to impress a knowledge of life upon the rising generation :—

> Little children, here ye may lere
> Much courtesy that is written here ;
> For clerks that the seven arts cunne
> Seyn that courtesy from heaven come,
> When Gabriel our Lady grette,
> And Elizabeth with Mary mette.[26]

All the good-will and attention which men show one another, however, is only a weak counterpart of that perfection of courtesy with which the faithful approach what is holy. In the plastics of kneeling and deep bowing the Catholic mind is expressed in its most significant manifestation, and the perfect portrayal of this manifestation is to be found in the pictures of the aged woman who bows before the living tabernacle of God. We can understand, therefore, that the Visitation has been one of the most popular subjects of Catholic art, and that the pious can read a profound import of religious thoughts and feelings into the story of the meeting of the holy women.

However clearly the painters and sculptors expressed in Elizabeth's bearing her reverence for God's sanctuary, they did not succeed in the medium of the arts of design in illustrating the marvellous effect of Mary's

approach which is specially mentioned in the Gospel—namely, the glad movements with which the unborn John rejoiced at his Master's presence, and by which, as the theologians expressed it, he showed himself holy even in his mother's womb. During the later Middle Ages, indeed, artists did not hesitate to paint even the two embryos greeting each other. Jesus, in Mary's womb, raised His hand in a gesture of blessing, and John on his side bowed humbly towards his Master.[27] But these attempts to represent the invisible meeting are few in number, and they completely fail in effect, both as works of art and as devotional pictures. That from which art had to abstain could, however, be treated by poetry and literature. Thus the piety of the unborn Baptist has often been praised both in poems and sermons, and the joy he expressed by his motions has been compared with the devotion of Christians in the presence of that God who can no more be seen in human shape, and who is no longer hidden in a living tabernacle in human form, but who is met instead in the Eucharistic Incarnation. "How often does it not happen," says the modern author Faber, "that a secret joy flames up within us when we approach the Sacrament house? . . . Joy, exultation, praise, delight, the sense of forgiveness, and the spirit of worship, these are exactly the fruits produced within us, as they were produced within the Baptist's soul."[28] All the feelings of gladness and worship which the faithful experience before the Host, are thus seen to correspond to the feelings which Mary's coming aroused in the holy embryo. No better proof can be desired of that connection between the symbolism of the Mass and the cult of Mary, of which one is unceasingly reminded when studying the Catholic religious life.

CHAPTER XVII

THE VIRGINAL BIRTH

How life and death in Thee
Agree!
Thou hast a virgin womb,
And tomb.
A Joseph did betroth
Them both.

RICHARD CRASHAW, *Steps to the Temple.*

IN the preceding chapters it has been related how, according to the ideas of the believers, God miraculously and mysteriously took up His abode in Mary's womb, and how she, without being troubled by her condition, bore the Highest in the pure tabernacle of her virgin body. It now remains to give an account of the ideas connected with the appearance of the Incarnate God on earth, *i.e.* with the miracle by which He left the womb without that closed and sacred shrine being broken.

The miraculous birth, it is easy to understand, is a delicate subject, which even the plain-spoken theologians of the Middle Ages treated with a certain caution. The Conception, which in itself was even more delicate, could be portrayed both in words and in pictures, when the ingenious doctrine of a "conceptio per aurem" had been evolved. If dogmatists had ventured to assert that God had chosen the same "new way" in the second case also, the doctrine would have been less perplexing

for both commentators and artists. That not only the Incarnation but also the birth took place through the Virgin's ear was, however, an idea from which even the Catholic theologians shrank back.[1] The Church maintained that Mary's Child was brought into the world in the same way as all other children; but it taught at the same time that the mother's virginity was not affected either mentally or even physically. This was an "absurdum," which could only be believed but neither proved nor explained.

The Patriarch Sergius who, in 622, wrote the stately hymn "Akátistos"—which has retained its place in the liturgy of the Greek Church until our own day—has with enviable clearness set forth the inability of reason to grasp the doctrine of the Madonna's "virginitas in partu." In the last of his 156 strophes he summons the seers and wise men of the past to look at the miracle, which they cannot comprehend; and even orators, to which class Sergius himself belonged, are invoked to testify to the great marvel—in a manner, however, which the verbose poet himself failed to imitate.

"We see," he says, "the greatest rhetoricians of all time standing around thy throne *as dumb as fishes*, O Mother of God, for all their reason sufficeth not to explain how thou wast able to bring forth thy child and yet remain a virgin."[2]

In all that has been said of the virginal motherhood, there is certainly nothing so imposing as the fact that the miracle succeeded in making even the professional orators keep silent. In the interest of truth, however, it must be confessed that the bold expressions of the hymn contain a good deal of exaggeration. Both in rhetoric and in poetry, indeed, the sacred birth was

praised in extensive descriptions. On the other hand it is notable—and this justifies to a certain extent the statement of Sergius—that usually the hymns, with the help of well-chosen symbols and similes, move round the outside of the miraculous event itself. With a few exceptions, which will be specially referred to later, they followed the example set by the author of the Gospel of James, when, at the decisive moment, he let a light cloud descend over the holy grotto, to conceal the event which earthly eyes neither could nor ought to see.

If a reverent reticence, which had already been suggested by the difficulty of describing the unthinkableness of a virginal motherhood, was thus observed with reference to the act of birth, men spoke all the more freely about the Virgin's condition after birth. Just as in the Apocryphal gospel Salome ventured with impertinent curiosity to examine the body of the pure girl, in order to convince herself that a virgin could bring forth a child, so the theologians have examined accurately and in detail the question of Mary's anatomical virginity. Through centuries they continued to discuss this gynaecological question, which, it should be noted, had not been settled by the establishment of the doctrine of God's *Incarnation* in a virgin's womb. The debates were long and heated, because they were connected with some of the great doctrinal disputes which disturbed the early Christian Church.

In the account of the miracle given, for example, by the author of the Protoevangile, a Doketist view was concealed. Only if it were assumed that God's human body was an apparition, could the fact that He came into the world without His mother ceasing to be a virgin be logically explained. It was, therefore, natural

that those who most zealously combated the Doketist heresy opposed the idea of a virginal birth. Tertullian, Ireneus, and Origen asserted, in terms which at later periods would have been regarded as violently heretical, that the Divine Child had "opened His mother's womb."[3] In support of this view Athanasius and Epiphanius quoted the passage in S. Luke's Gospel (ii. 23), where the presentation in the Temple is accounted for by a reference to the Mosaic ordinances concerning "every male who first opens the womb." Hieronymus, who completely altered his opinion later, expressed himself in 384, in his controversy with Helvidius, in a purely naturalistic manner.[4] Thus it seemed for a time, after Doketism had been conquered by orthodoxy, as if Mary's "virginitas in partu" had lost all prospects of being elevated to a Church dogma.

This sect, which caused the theologians so many misgivings, had, however, been only partially subdued. The Church established indeed that God Himself had submitted to all the pains of death, and it appeared, therefore, a natural conclusion that He had also undergone all the humiliations of birth; but in respect of this latter point, it proved far more difficult to thrust entirely aside the Doketist point of view. For this sectarian theory found great support in the ascetic movement, which in so many ways imperceptibly influenced orthodox theology. As we mentioned before, those who glorified monastic life had sought in the person of Mary the ideal for all pious nuns. In order to serve as a model of virginity, however, the Madonna ought to have remained a virgin throughout her life; and this again was impossible, at least in a physical sense, if it was admitted that the Divine Child "opened her womb." Therefore, by striving to emphasise

Mary's virginity; dogmatists were led back, probably unconsciously, to the point of view on which the Gospel of James was based. It is true that all expressions were avoided which might call to mind the Doketist heresy. It was not admitted that the Divine Child had only an apparitional and not a real body, but it was asserted that this body had by a miracle left the womb without the "seal of virginity having been broken";[5] and it was thought that a proof of the possibility of such a miracle was to be found in the fact that the Divinity had demonstrated on other occasions that no bolts could hinder His passage.

The first of the Western theologians to develop the doctrine of "virginitas in partu" by an exposition of this kind was that zealous champion of asceticism, S. Ambrosius. In his controversy with Jovinianus he quoted the much cited text in which, according to the Vulgate translation, Isaiah prophesied that a virgin should conceive and bear a son, and in support of his view he advanced another passage which seemed to him applicable to the holy birth. In the description of Ezekiel's visions (xliv. 2) there is mention of a gate which was and would always continue to be shut, and which none but Israel's God could pass through. Is it not clear, exclaims Ambrosius, that this shut gate is Mary, who let God pass through, *i.e.* who bore the Highest, and yet remained closed, *i.e.* preserved the seal of her virginity: "Bona porta Maria, quae clausa erat, et non aperiebatur. Transivit per eam Christus, sed non aperuit." It was, indeed, against nature's laws that a gate could give a passage and yet remain closed, but such an occurrence, according to Ambrosius, was not more incredible than that the sea had stood aside for the children of Israel, or that the Jordan flowed back to its sources.[6]

The utterances of Ambrosius were soon generally accepted by the leading theologians. At a Church Council at Milan, the doctrine of the virginal birth was adopted without opposition. Hieronymus recanted his assertions of thirty years earlier, and now employed all his ingenuity to prove that Mary's virginity was not incompatible with her motherhood. Augustine disseminated the same view in sermons, treatises and epistles, and his theses were copied faithfully by all the many authors who saw in him their teacher. "Virginitas in partu" became a dogma which no one who wished to be considered an orthodox Christian might doubt. This applied to the Oriental Church as much as to the Roman. Thus during the Nestorian dispute the miraculous birth and the mother's virginity were cited as proofs that the child must have been a god. Proclus, Theodotus of Ancyra, Ephraim Syrus, and Johannes Damascenus may be mentioned as the most important champions of the dogma in the East.[7]

All these authors based their arguments upon the Bible narratives of miracles which could be compared to the miraculous birth. Ambrosius, with his interpretation of Ezekiel's vision, had shown the way that the later dogmatists were to follow. The closed gate became an image of Mary, which was perpetually introduced in hymns, and finally took its place in the enumerations of the Madonna's epithets in the litany. Certain other passages, which harmonised still more completely with the doctrine of the virginal birth, were also quoted. When the Saviour, so it was said, entered among His disciples through shut doors, he proved His power of penetrating all that would hinder earthly bodies; and He gave a still more remarkable proof of this power

when, at the Resurrection, He issued forth from the closed and sealed grave.

This miracle was all the better suited for comparison with the miraculous birth, because the grave itself had often been likened to Mary's womb. The Virgin, indeed, enclosed in her body the same contents as the grave. To the symbolical mind this analogy was rich in mystic meaning, which gave poets and preachers occasion for many ingenious commentaries. Just as the pure rock, said Hieronymus, in which the God-man's body had been placed (Luke xxiii. 53; John xix. 41) had never been used either before or after as an abode for the dead, so Mary had neither before nor after borne any other fruit of her womb than the Divine Child.[8] Another similarity was pointed out by Ephraim Syrus. Just as the Highest descended into the Virgin's body and let Himself be born of it, so He had descended from the grave into Hades, and through the grave had ascended from the earth. If it was a miracle that, contrary to the order of nature, a virgin had borne a child, it was also a miracle that the unfruitful earth had miraculously allowed a living god to issue from the kingdom of the dead. Therefore Hades and Mary were two supernatural mothers, "duo uteri preternaturales." The only difference was that the Virgin was glad at her childbirth, while Hades was sorrowful at God's resurrection.[9]

In an old Easter hymn which has been ascribed, probably incorrectly, to S. Ambrose, the grave was similarly compared to the Mother of God. "Thou," it says, "who wast before born of a virgin, art born now of the grave":—

Qui natus olim ex virgine
Nunc e sepulcro nasceris.[10]

In mediaeval literature the similes used by the

early Christian Fathers recur. An author quoted by S. Alfonso Liguori even goes so far as to make Mary compare herself with the grave. When, we are told, the mother stood about to leave the place where Christ had been laid, she blessed the stone, and said: "O happy stone that dost now enclose the holy body which for nine months was hidden in my womb, I bless thee and envy thee. I leave in thy care my son, who is all my wealth and all my love."[11] The analogy between the grave shrine and the human shrine which had held the Prince of Life could not be expressed more clearly. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the miracle of the Resurrection it was sought to decipher symbolical references to the virginal birth.

In order to understand exactly how this analogy could be applied, we must investigate the ideas which were prevalent concerning the Resurrection story. There are, as is well known, many pictures and sculptures in which the Saviour is seen to rise from a grave whose bolt or doors are thrust aside. If these pictures gave a correct expression of the Church's ideas, there would have been no possibility of comparing the Resurrection with God's issuing from a *virgin* womb. The actual fact is, however, that the broken gates and the bolts drawn aside constitute a departure from the Biblical story of the grave miracle, as that story has been interpreted by Catholic theology. It is indeed said in the Gospels that the pious women, when they came to the grave to anoint the dead with sweet smelling spices, found the stone lifted away. From the account of Matthew (xxviii. 2), however, it may be concluded, without doing violence to the text, that it was only after the completion of the miracle that the "angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

back the stone from the door and sat upon it." It was in this way, at any rate, that the event was explained in the Catholic commentaries. The angel removed the door of the grave, not in order to open a way for the dead God, but in order to let men see that He had risen: "Surrexit enim, sicut dixit." He Himself needed no help in order to force a way out of His closed room, and at His exit He left its gates closed as before.[12] Even the seal, which the high priests and Pharisees had set upon the grave, remained unbroken at the Resurrection. This last-named detail was indeed neither mentioned nor even indicated in the canonical narrative, but the authors of the Apocryphal legends did not fail to complete the story in this respect. In an old Syrian history, "Concerning the Virgin Mary and the Image of Jesus," we read: "The watchers found that Jesus had arisen from the grave, and that the seals and the marks of the seals were unbroken."[13] Further, Ephraim Syrus says that the grave was sealed, and he expressly compares this fact with Mary's anatomical virginity: "Thus didst Thou show, O Lord, by Thy resurrection from the grave, the miracle of Thy birth, for each was closed and each was sealed, both the grave and the womb. Thou wast pure in the womb and living in the grave, and Mary's womb, like the grave, bore an unbroken seal."[14]

The same thoughts are varied by the leading theologians, both during the earlier centuries and during the Middle Ages. Even if the seal is not always mentioned, it is invariably maintained that the grave was closed during the Resurrection.

It may perhaps be objected that no decisive importance can be ascribed to these utterances, because in pictures of the Resurrection an opened grave is so often met with. The view that prevailed among painters

and-sculptors must, therefore, it is argued, have been different from that of the learned theologians. Such an objection appears at first sight thoroughly justified, but on a closer examination the argument loses a good deal of its effectiveness. As regards the early Middle Ages one can hardly base any kind of conclusion on the representations of painters and sculptors, for the mystery of the Resurrection belonged to the circle of subjects which for a long time—indeed, throughout the first ten centuries—were avoided by art with a kind of modest piety. Frequently, indeed, the demonstration of the miracle was rendered, *i.e.* the scene when the angel showed the empty grave to the pious women; but artists shrank from any rendering of the moment when God left the house of the dead. Thus, wherever we see the figures of Salome and the Maries by the open grave, it is probable that the visit to the sepulchre is the real subject of the picture. Only we must not be confused by the fact that we often recognise in these compositions the form of the Saviour Himself, revealing Himself to the Magdalene, or ascending from the mountains to heaven. Mediaeval art did not shrink from representing side by side several successive moments in a narrative. Thus even two so widely different motives as the Ascension and the miracle of the grave were united. This arrangement occurs very frequently upon sepulchral monuments, and such compositions have been incorrectly interpreted as representations of the Resurrection.[15]

From the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, the portrayal of the actual moment when God issued from His closed dwelling becomes more and more common,[16] and it cannot be denied that this portrayal conflicted with the Church's view of the

miracle. Whether it was due to the fact that in the interest of religious and aesthetic effect the artists desired to make the miracle more imposing, or that they copied the mounting of religious plays, at which it was impossible, for technical reasons, to represent the risen Saviour issuing from a shut room,[17] in pictorial art the Saviour, with a banner of victory in His hand and with His arm rhetorically outstretched, was made to rise from a grave whose lid had been violently thrust aside. The aid of the angel was not represented as necessary for the Resurrection, for the buried one Himself broke through the barrier; but it looked as if the stone had been removed in order to render the miracle possible, and not, as the theologians taught, in order to demonstrate it. As compositions of this kind were numerous, both in northern and in Italian painting, it is only natural that the Resurrection story was often subjected to misrepresentation; but the orthodox view was shortly to prevail in art. During the fifteenth century the holy grave was usually represented with a closed lid. In these pictures Christ often stood with one leg outside the chamber of death and with the other sunk in its surface.[18] Later, however, it became common to represent the Saviour as floating above the closed grave, and in order to emphasise the miraculous element in the event still more clearly, painters did not omit to paint on the front of the grave a great red circle, *i.e.* the unbroken seal.[19]

The magical element is accentuated by this seal with a clearness such as would be used to illustrate a conjurer's trick, and it was in this way that the Resurrection was regarded by the faithful. The Saviour was a mighty magician who, in early Christian sculpture, was even sometimes represented with the magician's staff

in his hand.[20] He performed greater wonders than any heathen sorcerer, but the greatest of all His arts He manifested at His birth and at His resurrection. The shrines in which He was enclosed were, therefore, not only holy, but also magical shrines, *i.e.* boxes which the Highest could enter and leave without their being opened. The idea of a sealed room being penetrated by the Divine Power was evidently dear to the pious, for they combined all the stories they knew about miracles of this kind. Even the lions' den, which was sealed with the king's seal and in which Daniel nevertheless received a visit from the angel of God, was compared by interpreters of the Bible both with the grave and with the Virgin's womb.[21] It may be taken for granted, therefore, that—even if the expositions of the old Fathers of the Church had sunk into oblivion—the great seal in the pictures of the Resurrection reminded the faithful of that shrine from which God had appeared without the seal of His mother's virginity having been broken. The analogy between the two miracles is so complete that, so far as the symbolic import is concerned, we can speak of the grave while referring to the Virgin. This is all the more advantageous because we are thereby spared from having to introduce those gynaecological details which render the virginal birth a delicate subject.

For the doctrine of the "virginitas in partu" is not yet completely treated. It is not sufficient to say that, according to the Church's view, God left His temporary abode as closed as it had been. It must also be explained how this miracle actually took place. On the one hand, it is conceivable that the mighty magician broke the seal of the grave and then immediately replaced it in its former condition; but it can also be

imagined that He had the power to pass through all closed gates without their seals being broken even for a moment. The first interpretation was evolved by Hieronymus, who by its help could embrace the dogma of a virgin birth without attaching himself to the Doketist theory.[22] In the Eastern Church the same explanation was advanced by some writers in the fifth century, but later this hypothesis became of small importance.[23] The general view—in which an influence from the heresy that Hieronymus sought to avoid cannot be denied—was that the Saviour's shape, unlike earthly bodies, could freely pass through all material objects. It was all the easier to maintain this opinion, inasmuch as a similar phenomenon could be observed in nature. Light could pass through a clear medium without hurting that medium, and without diminishing in power. God was the great light above all else. It was natural, therefore, that His passing through the closed doors should be explained as a phenomenon of radiation.

From the beginning of the ninth century theologians, in writing about the virgin birth, commenced to quote the analogy of the passage of light through glass, and poets knew well how to make use of so apt and poetical a simile. It is even probable that they would have been led to employ this simile independently of all dogmatic definitions. As early as the seventh century Venantius Fortunatus had compared Mary to a church which shone with the light of day through clear windows :—

> Lumine plena micans, imitata est aula Mariam.
> Illa utero lucem, clausit et ista diem.[24]

Once it was granted that God was enclosed in Mary's body in the same way as daylight in a church, it was

easy to liken His issuing from the womb to the streaming of light through a glass window. In the same way it could be explained that the Madonna's virginity had not been lost at the Incarnation. The window and the rays of light became, therefore, perpetually recurring similes, by the aid of which Church poetry illustrated both the Conception and the Birth. In the thirteenth century Alexander Neckham sang of the first miracle:—

Intrat vitrum radius
et non violatur
vitrum; sic castissima
verbo fecundatur.[25]

During the same century the birth was described by an anonymous writer as follows:—

Sicut vitrum radio
solis penetratur,
inde tamen laesio
nulla vitro datur,

Sic, immo subtilius
matre non corrupta
deus dei filius
Sua prodit nupta.[26]

S. Birgitta describes in detail how God entered "the body of the Virgin just as the sun shines through purest stone or glass."[27] In a French mystery of the fifteenth century Gabriel seeks, by the help of the same similes, to convince Mary that her virginity will not suffer any lessening from her motherhood:—

Mais tout ainssy com la verrière
Du soleil qui demeure entière
Quand son ray par my oultre passe,
Qui ne la brise ni ne quasse,
Ainsi demoura ton corps sains![28]

And a German song gives a still clearer application of the comparison:—

Als die Sonn durchscheint das Glass
mit ihrem klaren Scheine
Und doch nit versehret das
so mercket allgemeine:
In gleicher Weiss geboren wardt
von einer Jungfrau rein und zart
Gottes Son der werdte.[29]

In all these poems nothing is said as to the kind of glass though which the light streams in. For the purposes of the simile it is only presupposed to be clear and pure. In mediaeval churches, however, the windows were most often coloured. If the many-coloured panes in such a cathedral window were compared to the Holy Mother, the simile afforded a still more complete illustration of the course of events at the virgin birth. The glass, without suffering injury, allowed the light to pass into the church, but it also coloured the rays which were reflected on the floor and the walls. Again, the light was not dimmed, although it borrowed the colour of the window; that is to say, it retained its essence but altered the form of its manifestation. In this phenomenon, according to the view of Catholic theologians, a deep thought lay hidden. It was in the same way, they said, that God, when He issued from Mary's womb, borrowed from His mother His human shape, without losing His divine nature. "Bruder Hans" has poetically expressed this ingenious idea in one of his "Marienlieder":—

Went wy der sonnen glantze
Sich nach dem glase varwet,
So hat der hymmelschrantze
Mit dyme fleysch und blute sich ghegarwet
Und bleyf doch god in godlicher nature,
Do daz wort wart fleysch ghemacht,
Und bleyf in dynen wax der prent figure.[30]

If God could be compared to a ray of light, it was

still more natural to liken Him to the great source of light itself. It has been observed by A. Meyer that such a metaphor is indicated, if not worked out, as early as in the Protoevangile, for the way in which Christ's birth is described spontaneously calls to mind a sunrise. When Joseph and Salome entered the holy grotto, they first saw a light cloud, then a diffused shining, and finally the Divine Child.[31] "Sol splendidissimus," this Child was often called by the Fathers of the Church. His mother, again, according to the symbolical view, was a cloud in which the light of day was enclosed before it broke forth over the world. The metaphors used to describe the sun issuing from a cloud could, therefore, be applied without alteration to the holy birth. In this, as in so many other respects, the Psalms had to pay tribute of similes to the Christian poets. One of them in especial has been imitated time after time in the poetry of Mary—that great hymn, the mightiest of all songs to the sun, in which the sun's issue from the clouds is compared to a bridegroom who rises from his bridal bed or bride-chamber, in order, like a hero, to run forth on his course :—

> In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,—Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.—His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.—Ps. xix. 4-6.

"In sole posuit tabernaculum suum; et ipse tanquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo Exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam.—A summo coelo egressio ejus—Et occursus ejus usque ad summum ejus; nec est qui se abscondit a calore ejus" (*Versio Vulgata*, Ps. xviii. 6-7).[32]

These verses were all the more applicable to the

holy birth, because, as has already been pointed out, the Incarnation was regarded as a marriage relationship. Mary's womb, it was said, was a bride-chamber in which God united Himself to mankind. Therefore, without doing any violence to the Catholic view, Ambrosius, or the unknown poet who wrote the great Christmas Hymn, could sing of the virgin birth :—

Procedat e thalamo suo
Pudoris aula regia
Geminae gigas substantiae
Alacris ut currat viam.

"May the giant of the twofold nature rise from his bed in the kingly hall of chastity to run forth in joy upon his course." [33]

Augustine, Pope Leo IX., and many other authors have given varying expressions to the same idea both in verse and prose,[34] and it is the old Psalm which is the basis of the description of the Birth Night in Sedulius's *Carmen paschale* :—

"What new light goes not up over the world, what shining over all Heaven, when Christ in shimmering splendour issues from Mary's womb, as a bridegroom goes forth in triumph from his richly adorned bridal chamber, more beautiful than any child of men, and with grace and comeliness outpoured over His shining countenance."

Quae nova lux mundo, quae toto gratia coelo !
Quis fuit ille nitor, Mariae cum Christus ab alvo
Processit splendore novo ? Velut ipse decoro
Sponsus ovans thalamo, forma speciosus amoena
Prae natis hominum, cujus radiante figura
Blandior in labiis diffusa est gratia pulchris.[35]

It is noticeable that in this, as in so many others of the Church's poems, the Child is not compared with the

sun, but is sung of as a new sun. The figurative expression by which the Saviour called Himself "the Light of the World," was often understood by the pious quite literally. As Hofmann well pointed out, we ought, if we are to follow correctly the Catholic idea, in speaking of the mystery of the Holy Night, not to speak of the new-born Child as having for the first time seen the light of the world, but of the world having for the first time seen its true light.[86] The mediaeval writers affirmed in their sermons that the Child's body at His birth "shone like a sun." So far as lay in their power, the painters also sought to illustrate this thought in their pictures—during the Middle Ages by surrounding the little figure by a circle of golden rays,[87] and during the late Renaissance, when technique allowed of a more illusive treatment of optical phenomena, by making the light extend over the whole composition from the God who rested upon the ground.

The import of all these pictures and poems is not difficult to understand. The old sun, so they seem to say, had been replaced by a purer and more spiritual light, and it was a new era that set in with the virgin birth. Therefore the whole world stayed in its motion. Springs welled forth from the earth's interior and the idols tumbled down. Life was honoured by God submitting Himself to its changes, and all relations existing between mankind were purified in His birth. Motherhood and virginity, conception and childbirth, were idealised in Mary, who bore a Child without losing her innocence. From nature and all belonging to it the stains of sin were expunged; but what was outside nature, and in conflict with it, could not be purified but only destroyed. It might not exist in a world sanctified by the presence of the Highest. Just as

the idols fell into pieces, so at the moment of the holy birth all men who had been guilty of unnatural vices were rooted out.[38] They had offended so deeply against the laws of nature—so the legend was probably explained—that they could not survive the new birth of nature.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HOLY MANGER

I am not proud—meek angels ye invest
New meeknesses to hear such utterance rest
On mortal lips—"I am not proud"—not proud!
Albeit in my flesh God sent His Son;
Albeit over Him my head is bowed,
As others bow before Him; still, mine heart
Bows lower than their knees.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING,
The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus.

As has been shown in the preceding chapter, Mary's virginal childbirth afforded Catholic theologians an opportunity for much daring speculation. The miraculous event has been treated as a biological miracle, which indeed baffled every attempt at explanation, but which none the less lured men to repeated and far-reaching expositions; and God's human birth has been represented as a cosmological phenomenon by which the old order of nature was entirely shattered. Such philosophical interpretations have undeniably allowed the great and mysterious elements in the pious legend to acquire their due prominence, and they have further afforded literature the occasion for ingenious conceits and stately descriptions of nature. They are, however, too abstract to be able to serve the purposes of pictorial art, and they do not offer sufficient nourishment to the poetic imagination, which demands living and graphic ideas of the religious mysteries.

The Gospel narratives had not educated the pious to regard the Birth as an astronomical phenomenon, or as an union of incompatible ideas. S. Matthew and S. Luke made no mention of a sun that came forth from a cloud, but of a woman, a child, and a manger in a stable. The earthly scene in Bethlehem, therefore, was a subject which for devotional purposes became dearer and more profitable than all the philosophic and dogmatic thoughts attached to the ideas concerning God's birth. However much the rhetorical embellishments, with which the theologians adorned their descriptions of the Holy Night, were appreciated and utilised, the symbols and similes were not permitted to overshadow the purely human moments of the event. People's thoughts lingered with the mother and the newborn Child, and they sought to make their ideas of them as vivid as possible. The Bible's description was completed by new features—drawn from the Apocryphal gospels, from popular legends, from the visions of seers, and from the imagination of individual artists—which were to give the situation a richer illusion of reality. Thus was developed, from elements derived from the most different sources, that picture of the miracle of the Holy Night which both in art and poetry has exercised so immeasurable an influence on Catholic life.[1]

In the earliest Christian art, so far as is known at present, the Birth is represented not by itself alone, but only in connection with the worship of the Shepherds or the Magi.[2] Mary sits by the Child's bed, or holds the little God on her knee, to receive on His behalf the homage of the first believers. Her position is stiff and dignified, and there is nothing to denote that she has lately brought a child into the world. These compositions have clearly been influenced by antique

sculpture. As Venturi pointed out, one seems to recognise, in the Madonna's figure and bearing, traits belonging to the Olympian Juno or to the stern Pudicitia—those high models which, a thousand years later, lend their dignity to the Madonnas of the early Renaissance sculptors.[3]

At the transition to the Middle Ages men began to treat the Nativity in independent compositions. Mary is now portrayed as the bearer of a child, lying or half-sitting on her bed, and, in accordance with the account in the Protoevangile, a midwife is often represented by her side. When this woman stretches out her right hand towards the Child, she may be identified as the unbelieving Salome, whose arm was paralysed as a punishment for her doubt and regained its power of movement when she confessed her faith. Sometimes we recognise also the faithful Joseph, who brought the two midwives to Mary's bed. By the introduction of these subsidiary persons the compositions gain the character of genre pieces—a character which during the later Middle Ages becomes more and more accentuated. Thus we can often see the new-born Saviour, like the little child Mary, being bathed and dried and wrapped in swaddling-clothes.[4] In the great reliefs of Niccolò Pisano and his pupils such a washing scene has a regular place by the manger and Mary; and in Giotto's fresco at Padua a woman hands the swathed Child to its mother, who lies stretched upon a bed.

This last detail, however, openly conflicts with the Gospel narrative. S. Luke says expressly that Mary herself, when she bore her Son, "wrapped him in swaddling-clothes and laid him in a manger." Giotto's fresco has therefore been strongly disapproved of by

orthodox art critics. Not only, indeed, have they censured those compositions in which Mary is made to accept help in her first care of the Child, but in their opinion the whole mediaeval type of illustrations to the Nativity scenes, which has been shortly characterised here, contains a misrepresentation of the sacred history.

Zealous protests, for instance, have been made against the artists' representation of the washing of the new-born Child. It is, indeed, intelligible that all those who disapproved of the pictures of Mary's bath, were shocked with far greater reason by the introduction of such a motive into pictures of God's birth. The idea, it was argued, that He whose birth was as pure as His conception, could have been in any need of washing, is fundamentally erroneous. Some of the early Fathers had already sternly rejected this idea, and modern authors used much ingenuity to show its absurdity. Since, however, it could not be disputed that many Christian artists had painted the God-child's bath, and that even a number of pious Fathers had mentioned such an event, some explanation of the inconvenient circumstance had to be sought for.

Thus Trombelli has argued that one may wash even a clean being, "just as we often wash our hands and face, in spite of their not being the least unclean";[5] but the modern writer Grimouard de S. Laurent has found a more satisfactory interpretation which, even if it dates from the nineteenth century, agrees admirably with the mediaeval point of view. If, he says, it is inconceivable that any water could purify purity itself, on the other hand God could cleanse the water He touched in His bath. Such a purification was all the more fitting, inasmuch as the water was to have a significant use in the Church's Sacrament. In the washing after the

Nativity there should be seen, therefore, a reference to Baptism.[6] In support of such an explanation it might be advanced—if one desires to follow Catholic art criticism—that in certain mediaeval sculptures the bath takes a form which calls to mind a font.[7] To the theological mind there must be something attractive in the idea that immediately after His appearance on earth God sanctified the element which in Baptism sanctifies the faithful. If this interpretation became commonly accepted, the bathing scenes in the old Nativity compositions could not do any harm to pious spectators, who ought only to recall that distinction between the two different kinds of washing which gave rise to the use of double washing-basins in the Mass apparatus.

Grimouard de S. Laurent has further given an orthodox explanation of the presence of the two midwives at Mary's bed. It must be supposed, he says, that they were summoned only to confirm the youthful mother's virginity. Thus, like the angel at the grave, they were not required in order to bring about the miracle, but only to demonstrate it. If the artists desired to suggest that the Holy Mother had accepted any assistance from them, that, according to the Catholic view, would be a heresy which could not be condemned sufficiently strongly.[8] The utterances of the early Fathers are in this respect quite unequivocal. Not even Hieronymus, who had been led to a relatively materialistic view of the Nativity during his dispute with the Doketists, and who confessed with a defiant frankness that he "did not blush" at all the humiliation to which the Mother of God was subjected at her childbirth,—even he does not admit that there could have been any need of serving-women when the highest of

all children came into the world: "Nulla ibi obstetrix, nulla muliercularum sedulitas intercessit. Ipsa [Maria] pannis involvit infantem, ipsa et mater et obstetrix fuit."[9] The Holy Mother was herself her own midwife; and she could the better dispense with all external assistance, because her birth was painless and easy. For she who had conceived her Child without sin must have been free from all the pangs which, with other earthly beings, accompany delivery.

The very way in which God's birth was explained by similes included an idea of a mild accouchement. He came into the world as light filters in through a window; or as the sun, not breaks, but quietly streams out through a dispersed cloud. Therefore the believers could in imagination paint with naïve traits pictures of Mary, who, having been warned by no pang or spasm, was surprised at having given birth to the Divine Child.

This view has been developed as early as by Zeno of Verona in one of his sermons: "Mary does not know the suffering of motherhood, for she has taken into her the world's Creator, and she bears Him not with pain, but with joy. Marvellous! she brings rejoicing into the world a child that is older than all Nature. And the young mother does not lament, and the new-born babe does not, as is usually the case, begin its life with tears. Its mother does not lie outstretched upon a bed, she is not strained after the birth, or prostrate in her limbs. Nor is either Son or mother made unclean by the birth, and no bath is necessary for Him who came into the world to purify the race from the stains of sin."[10]

In *The Meditations of Bonaventura* it is said that "God's Son in the same hour issued without pain from

the Virgin's womb, and lay in front of her, and His mother bent down and lifted Him up, embraced Him affectionately, and took Him to her bosom. And at the inspiration of the Holy Ghost she rubbed all His noble body with her milk." [11] The child, indeed, received a bath, but it was washed in an element which was purer than water. S. Birgitta, who in her visions witnessed the holy event with her own eyes, says that "the Saviour was born so suddenly that she could neither see nor understand how it happened. She only saw the glorious child lying pure and naked and shining on the earth." [12] A still more peculiar description is given by S. Mechthild von Magdeburg. "When the time was come," says the pious sister in her *Offenbarungen*, "when other women feel prostrated and troubled in their movements, Mary was light of heart and merry; for she bore in her womb God's most perfect Son. Mary knew nothing of the hour when God desired to be born of her, before she saw Him resting in her bosom, on the way during the night at the strange town of Bethlehem, where she herself was a stranger without a lodging." The continuation is too precious to be rendered in a translation: "Der allmächtige Gott mit seiner Weisheit, der ewige Sohn mit seiner menschlichen Wahrheit, der heilige Geist mit seiner wonnigen Seligkeit, gieng durch die ganze Wand des Leibes Maria mit schwebender Wonne und mühelos. Das war so bald geschehen, wie die Sonne giebt ihren Schein nach dem süszen Thau in minniglicher Ruhe." [13]

A birth which is like the sunshine over dewdrops can naturally occasion no weariness in the mother. This had been pointed out by Zeno, and it was repeated time after time by the mediaeval writers. Therefore disapproval was also expressed of those compositions in

which the Holy Mother was represented in a recumbent posture; although, on the other hand, in excuse for the artists the suggestion was thrown out that after the birth Mary remained at home and observed the ceremonies usual for mothers, "in order not to distinguish herself from other women."[14]

It is difficult to determine whether in this respect orthodox criticism exercised any immediate influence on artistic production. Whether it was due to a stricter observation of theological dogmas, or to a change in the direction of aesthetic taste, it is in any case a fact that the realistic Nativity compositions become more and more rare with the commencement of the Renaissance. After the thirteenth century the figures of the midwives gradually disappear, although, probably under the influence of the religious theatre, they became popular once more during a transitional period;[15] and in later times the Madonna is but seldom represented in a recumbent position. When men wanted to portray a childbirth they chose as their subject the birth of Mary, but not that of Jesus. In accordance with the descriptions of poets and theologians, the Mother of God was represented as a woman who was not even outwardly troubled by her motherhood. In many cases it was only the manger, the ox, and the ass which showed that the compositions referred to the Holy Night, and these compositions did not represent the actual moment of birth, but some later events which took its place as subjects of devout meditation. Both in art and poetry three motives aroused special attention, namely, Mary's *worshipping* of the Child, her *suckling* it, and her *motherly caresses*. The two later subjects could of course be isolated from the holy birth, but as a Catholic author has pointed out, they none the less

invîte pious imagination to meditate on the mystery at Bethlehem.[16] It is therefore most proper to give an account of these subjects also in the chapter on the Madonna at the manger.

That Mary worshipped her new-born Child is mentioned neither in the canonical nor in the Apocryphal gospels. This idea belonged instead to those which theological imagination derived from its dogmatic presuppositions without any external prompting. When the earthly mother had given birth to her heavenly Son—so it was argued—it could not be her first care to look after His physical well-being. She who saw the Incarnate God before any one else, must first think of doing homage to His greatness. She kneeled before the tender Being, praised the power that hid itself in His little form, and prayed to be allowed to take care of Him as of her own child. As early as in Ephraim Syrus's sermons the mother humbly addresses the new-born Child before she "offers the sources of her milk to Him who is Himself the source of all things."[17] The mystical authors of the Middle Ages often set forth how the Madonna subjected herself to her own child,[18] and in the Church office it is expressly said, "Virgo quem genuit adoravit"—"the Virgin worshipped Him whom she had borne." It is on this text that most of the Renaissance pictures of the Holy Night have been composed. Sometimes, like Correggio in his famous canvas in the Uffizi, painters confined themselves to representing only the worshipping mother and her Child. As a rule, however, Joseph too gets his place in the picture,[19] and partakes in the act of homage together with the two pious beasts, the ox and the ass, who kneel before Creation's Lord. The angels of Heaven

unite in Mary's prayer with songs of praise, and the shepherds enter as silent and humble witnesses of the religious act. The grotto or shed becomes a temple, with the manger as an altar, at which the first Christian service is held. Thus the historical description gives place to a ritual ceremonial picture, whose motive is purely mystical in purport. Instead of the family scene, which shocked pious feelings with its bath and swaddling clothes and its group of busy midwives, there appeared a purely religious composition, the solemn character of which was not marred by any realistic details.

In poetic and artistic descriptions of the suckling of the child at Mary's breast we have to make a similar distinction between the theological and the realistic conceptions of the subject. As early as the first centuries, religious poetry, as appears from the recent quotation from Ephraim Syrus, had paid attention to this motive. For those who, like the Eastern bard, speculated as to the import of the dogmas, there must have been something grand in the idea of the Creator of the world receiving His food from an earthly being. Such a thought was advanced all the more readily because Nestorius in his heresy had dared to deny the possibility of the Highest having in human wise "sucked a woman's breast.[20] But no theological argumentation was necessary to cause the suckling of the Divine Child to become a favourite subject for pious meditation. According to S. Luke's narrative, it was a woman of the people who had invoked the Saviour in the words which were afterwards adopted by the liturgy of the Catholic Church: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck" (Luke xi. 27).[21] And it harmonised well with the popular view that in worship-

ping Mary men's thoughts should be devoutly directed to her virginal mother's bosom. The breasts and their milk were included in the sanctity of motherhood. Through them God was bound in gratitude to her who had given Him food. He could not, so people imagined, refuse His assent to any of her prayers, if only she reminded Him of the time when He lay as a child at her bosom;[22] and when in pictures of the Last Judgment Mary was represented as the advocate of the accused, she was made, as if to give her pleadings more weight, to direct her hand to her breast or to expose a part of her bosom to the Judge.[23] Accordingly the sinful saw a hope of forgiveness in "the breasts which thou didst suck."

All these associations of thought make it intelligible why the Church's poets unceasingly sang of "Mariae matris mammulae,"[24] and why artists often portrayed the Madonna with her bosom exposed.[25] During the fourteenth century, when it became usual to represent the suckling mother, the subject was still treated with great caution, but during the Renaissance it sometimes happened that the sacred breasts were entirely exposed to view. Catholic critics have even expressed their disapproval of the Madonna being given too deep a *décolletée*.[26] There are, however, few if indeed any pictures of the Madonna which could arouse misgivings of this kind in any but a Puritan beholder. Purely sensuous beauty has indeed often been portrayed in religious works of art, but it is usually the Magdalene or some other of the penitent sinners who represent this type. The Virgin's figure, on the contrary, is characterised by chastity and sublimity even during the least rigorous periods of art. Mary, it seems, bares her bosom in naïve innocence, because she is a mother, and because the suckling of a

child is a worthy action that can only be looked upon with respect. Indeed the "Madonna and Child" is a devotional picture even for those who do not confess the Catholic dogmas; and there have been times when this picture has been employed, with praiseworthy intention but doubtful taste, for educational and hygienic purposes. The religious paintings have been reproduced on fly-sheets, by the help of which it was attempted to arouse mothers to a sense of their duties towards their children. From the Holy Virgin, it was said, it should be learned that every mother ought to suckle her child.[27]

Such is the worldly and non-dogmatic view of the "lactatio" motive, but Catholic theologians do not consent to see in pictures representing this subject only a glorification of human motherhood. Such an import is for them far too simple and ordinary. They will not even admit that the little child should be regarded as a child. "The Eldest of Days" and "The Lord of Worlds" He is called in the chants and services in which God's suckling is celebrated. "He was the same in the bosom of the Father and in the Virgin's womb, in His mother's arms and on the wings of the wind."[28] Mary was not, so it was said, a mother feeding her child at her breast, but she was a virgin giving the breast to her own and to all Creation's father. Theological interpretation even went so far as to compare the pictures of Mary and the little Jesus with the pictures of "Caritas Romana," *i.e.* with the representations, common in the late Renaissance, of the old legend of a young Roman girl who fed her starving father in prison with the milk of her breasts.[29]

As the Divine Child was thus made into an old person, so Mary's milk was not to be ordinary mother's

milk, nor her breast an ordinary breast. In the descriptions of pious writers the allegories often gain such an ascendancy that the motive, so simple in its greatness, obtains a purely dogmatic import. One has only to read how Mechthild von Magdeburg describes the vision in which she witnessed the suckling of the Divine Child. Mary had wrapped the new-born infant in swaddling clothes and duly laid Him in the manger: "But then He began to cry like a little human child, for as long as children cannot speak they weep when they suffer a real need. And thus did Our Lord now, for He, because of our sin, in spite of His noble nature had so hard a bed in a narrow cattle-stall, and He wept over the whole human race and thus concealed [by weeping] all His sweetness and all His power. Then was the Virgin sorrowful and the child was hungry and cold, and the mother must quiet her Son; it was His Father's will and the Holy Ghost's pleasure. Then the Virgin bowed with motherly love in virginal humility to her suffering child and offered Him her young breasts. Behold now the great miracle. The shining flowers of her lovely eyes, and the spiritual beauty of her virgin's countenance, and the melting sweetness of her pure heart and the grace of her noble soul—these four things, according to the Father's will, the Son's need, and the Holy Ghost's blessed joy, united in her virgin bosom. Then the sweet milk flowed from her pure heart painlessly, and the child sucked His food in human wise, and His mother rejoiced lovingly, the angels sang a hymn to God, and the shepherds came, sought and found our true Redeemer, swathed in swaddling clothes, and lying in a little manger." [30]

It is important to notice the symbolical way in which Mary's motherhood is here explained. For S.

Mechthild employs an allegory which was used by the theological writers both before and after her day, and which was in perfect agreement with the fantastic descriptions of the Incarnation mystery. The conception of the Divine Man had been brought about by a heavenly dew, but the dew was an image of the grace that descended upon mankind. The sublime Child, again, had been fed at a human bosom and was quieted by Mary's mother's-milk; but the bosom was an image of the mercifulness, and the milk issued not from the Madonna's body but from her virtues and beauty.[81] In this manner all the natural events could be explained as similes, and the concrete pictorial motives could be regarded as expressions of purely theological thoughts. Mary was looked upon not as an individual human being, but as the incarnation of an eternal principle which had exercised its power long before it became embodied in the figure of the Jewish girl. The Madonna's motherly care had previously been directed to all the faithful, who had been fed by her "milk" in the same way as the Child of Bethlehem. In Mechthild's revelations it is even expressly said that the Madonna suckled the prophets before Christ descended into the world. Later, she fed during His childhood "the God of her and all of us," and when He was full-grown she offered her milk to the Christian Church. All friends of God could get strength at her bosom. "Eja, darnach sollen wir bekennen—Die Milch und auch die Brüste—Die Jesus so oft küsste." [82]

In the great Swedish seeress we find the same daring similes as in Mechthild. When S. Birgitta reproaches the Pope for not having remained in Rome, but returned to his place of exile after his short visit to the holy city, she makes Mary say: "He had the inspiration

of the Holy Ghost to come to Rome and exercise justice and strengthen the Christian faith and renew the Holy Church. And even as a mother leads her child whether she will by showing him her breast, so I led him without any bodily peril to Rome. But now he turns his back to me, and not his face, and will go from me." [33] In another passage of Birgitta's visions the Madonna promises her aid to the Pope if he will only fulfil his duty and take his place in the capital of the Church. "Mary, the Mother of God, said: As a mild mother who sees her beloved son lying cold on the earth and powerless to raise himself, crying for his mother's help with mournful voice—then she lifts him up and warms him with motherly love, and quickens him with the milk of her breasts. So will I, the mother of mercifulness, do to Pope Gregory, if he will come to Rome and stay there for his soul's good and renew the Holy Church's statutes in humility and love. Then like a mild mother will I lift him up naked and cold from the earth—that is, separate his heart from all worldly lust and affection that is contrary to God's will—and I will warm him sweetly with my breast's love and quicken him with the milk of my prayers. O how innumerable are they who have been supported by the milk of my prayers and fed sweetly by it." [34]

It may perhaps seem as if in these and similar utterances we have to do merely with a rhetorical imagery which had no influence on the view held of the Madonna. It is true that Mary's figure often absolutely disappears in the allegories, and that what is said of her can in many cases be equally well applied to any other of the saintly personages. S. Birgitta, for instance, on one occasion makes God the Father Himself speak of how He nourished mankind with "the milk of His Word"; [35] and

in Mechthild, and Catholic authors generally, the Mother of God and the Church are often used as interchangeable terms. When it is said that Mary nourished the Apostles and the faithful at her bosom, the idea "Church" has lent a number of its attributes to the idea of the Virgin. Sometimes, on the other hand, the Church is in its turn described by qualities that originally belong to Mary. This is the case when Mechthild relates how S. Francis and S. Dominic were "fed at the two breasts that are so full of sweet mīlk that they never can run dry—for these breasts are the Old and New Testament, with which our mother the Church suckles all the children of God."[86] In reading these daring similes one might feel uncertain whether, even in those cases where she expressly mentions Mary's name, the pious seeress was really thinking of the Virgin, and not rather of an abstract idea. But if the theological and philosophic literature—and it is under this heading that the writings of Mechthild and Birgitta must be classed—has to do with indefinite concepts, on the other hand the legends and works of art are quite unambiguous in their concrete language.

Thus there can be no question of symbolism when in the miracle-histories it is related that the Madonna cured pious invalids with her healing milk.[87] It is also told of some holy men that they were quite literally refreshed by Mary's breast. The pious Suso relates without reserve, and in a description of great detail, how he tasted "den himmlischen Trunk";[88] and Bernard of Clairvaux, who merited the Virgin's gratitude more than any other man, was rewarded for all his panegyrics and poems by Mary visiting him in his cell and letting his lips be moistened by the food of the Heavenly Child.[89] This event has been represented many times in pictorial art.[40]

In all these cases it is probable that the legends arose from a too literal interpretation of the symbolical language of the theologians, but the hidden meaning of the notions "milk" and "breast" naturally remained unknown to the majority of those who read the legends or looked at the pictures. In the Madonna's gift to S. Bernard a real "lactatio" was seen, just as in the "Madonna and Child" nothing was seen save a picture of human motherhood. All the dogmatic profundities attached to the idea of Mary's bosom did not succeed in exercising any immediate influence on artistic production. All that can be supposed is that the ecclesiastical art-patrons perhaps excused, with the help of the symbolical interpretation, such compositions as might otherwise have appeared too worldly and ordinary. The pictures themselves lose nothing of their religious or aesthetic worth through our not knowing that the naked breasts can signify the Old and the New Testament, or through our not remembering that the suckling infant is "older than the worlds." For art and poetry it is an actual woman, and not the symbol of an abstract idea, that gives her milk to her child, and gladdens her faithful worshippers with drops of the Divine Food.

When once men began to conceive of the relationship between Mary and the Divinity as a purely human relationship, they naturally wished to express the Madonna's love for the Child. She would not have been a real mother if she had only suckled her son. It could not but be imagined that, as it said in the old Swedish song, "she laid Him on her breast, and sweetly patted Him and kissed."[41] When the Highest so far concealed His might as to let Himself be born into the world

as a helpless baby, He must, like other children, have needed to be comforted with caresses, baby-talk, and games. Mary knew well how the little one should be cheered, and as pictured in later mediaeval art and poetry she is, in motherly affection also, a pattern for all earthly women. It was long, however, before this trait became predominant in the Catholic Madonna-type, for so much weight was attached to the divinity of the new-born Child that men neither could nor would take into account the possibility of any intimate and familiar relations between Him and His mother. Therefore there is, as a rule, no naïveté in the accounts of the Nativity given by the old Christian poets.

This rule is, however, limited by one great and notable exception. Ephraim Syrus, the fourth-century Eastern bard, has expressed in his Christmas Songs a purely personal and almost dramatically vivid conception of the Holy Mother's loving play with her Child. These *Hymni de nativitate Christi in carne* are all the more interesting, inasmuch as they are not only distinct from the poetry of the period and of the following centuries, but also stand in sharp contrast to the rest of the poet's works. Ephraim's diction is usually, as appears from the examples recently quoted, stately and cold in its rhetorical splendour. As a rule he emphasises the theological and philosophic ideas so strongly that he completely loses sight of the human element. "The Eldest of Days," "The Mighty," "The All-Embracing" are the epithets with which he most frequently praises the new-born Son of God. He can even, in order to illustrate the Child's loftiness in relation to the mother's lowness, choose such strained similes as that in which he compares Mary to a dove which bears an eagle on its wings: "The tender dove bears on its wings an old

eagle, bears him and sings his praise in caressing tones: O Mighty Son, that didst will to prepare thy couch in my poor dwelling, give power to my voice, so that I may proclaim thy name with the voice of Cherubim." [42]

Such eloquence can naturally not be applied to descriptions of a mother who caresses her child or romps with it. In his Christmas Songs, however, the old rhetorician climbs down from his high stilts and condescends to talk in simple language. He makes Mary say to the new-born Child: "Thou art to me a *child* and a bridegroom and a God." And he describes graphically how she comforts the little one in His sorrows: "Mary bore the hero of the ages, the strong giant, who issued from the Father's being, and who lay hidden in the bosom of God. And the Virgin warmed at her breast the new-born Child, caressed Him, and rejoiced with gladness at His bed. And He Himself looked smilingly at her, as a little child, where wrapped in His swaddling-clothes He lay outstretched in the manger of the stable. When He began to cry, His mother arose to give Him milk from her breast, embraced Him with affectionate caresses, and rocked Him on her knee, and then the Child's crying ceased." [43]

In another song Ephraim sets forth the humility with which Mary fulfils her motherly duty. "She bore the Child in her arms," he says, "caressed it, embraced it, sung to it, and worshipped it, saying, 'Permit, Master, that I embrace thee.'" [44] But if here, too, the poet recalls the subordination of man to God, he does not allow the mother to be troubled by her inferiority: "Mary stands by thy side, thy mother, thy sister, thy bride, and thy servant; herself she bore thee, and now she embraces thee with love, presses close to thee,

kisses thee, praises thee, calls upon thee and thanks thee, and offers thee milk from her breast; she holds thee in her arms, sings to thee, and smiles at thy childishness, whilst thou, gay and smiling, dost receive thy food from her bosom."[45]

Over Ephraim's detailed, genre-like, and almost intimate description of how the mother rocks the Child on her knee and smiles at His joyful face, there lies a poetic atmosphere for which one looks in vain throughout the early Christian literature. Nearly a thousand yeārs passed before the Western Church made use of the familiar method of treating religious motives. The Roman Fathers spoke of the Divine Child as one speaks of a dogma, and its mother was regarded either as a dogma or as a moral example. Her qualities were deduced with dialectical acumen from certain predominant fundamental qualities, and her beauty and virtues were praised in majestic rhetoric; but she was not seen as a living and feeling human being. Only after the Franciscan movement had taught the faithful to regard religion as a purely personal experience, could pious imagination form pictures of the mother's affection and the Child's loveableness.

In his great work on S. Francis, Henry Thode has shown how profound an influence the life and teaching of the Umbrian saint exercised on Christian art-production. He has specially emphasised the fact that it is in the Franciscan poets that the earliest expression is found of the naïve poetry which is indissolubly associated in our consciousness with the idea of the Madonna and her Child.[46] It was Francis himself who, by his Christmas festival at Greccio in 1223, originated the cult of the Holy Manger—that joyful and popular cult which includes in its dramatic ritual so many naïvely poetical antiphons

between Mary and the watching shepherds and kings.[47] In the Umbrian "Lauda," the Madonna's worship of the Child and the marks of affection she showed to it is described in a tone which unites the simple joy of folk-song with the devotion of the religious hymn.[48] And in that Franciscan devotional book known as *The Meditations of Bonaventura* is described in detail how Mary "with joy and comfort and motherly love" embraced and kissed Him "whom she knew to be her God, and her son and master"; how she "kneeled before Him, before she took Him up from the cradle, and when she laid Him down in it"; and how frequently and affectionately she gazed at His face and His "blessed body."[49] *The Meditations of Bonaventura*, as is well known, was one of the most widely read books of the Middle Ages, and by it the Franciscan point of view was spread through the Catholic world. Indeed, one finds that after the thirteenth century Mary's relationship to the Child was more and more regarded as a subject which could be more suitably treated of in lyrical poetry than in theological rhetoric; and in this relationship the mother is praised for that peculiar mixture of reverent worship and pious familiarity which is sung of in the Umbrian hymns, and which is so effective in the Christmas Songs of Ephraim Syrus...

In pictorial art the motive has, to a great extent, undergone the same development as in poetry. The Mary who, on early Christian reliefs, presides over the homage of the Magi or the shepherds, is too much of a ceremonial figure to express any feeling of familiar affection; and we do not see any essential motherliness in the woman who, in mediaeval reliefs, ivory carvings, enamels, or manuscript illustrations, lies outstretched on her bed close to the new-born Child. The artists have

often so sharply accentuated the Son's divinity that the idea of a relationship between Him and His mother is quite precluded. Thus, there are many works, especially from the thirteenth century, in which the manger—in order to commemorate the connection between the sacramental and the human incarnation—has received the form of an altar.[50] The woman who rests by the altar appears here more as the foremost protectress of the high mystery of the Sacrament than as a human parent of the tender Child. In cases, again, where the Church's symbolism has not been expressly emphasised, *i.e.* where God's bed is really a manger, this has often been placed above Mary—an arrangement by reason of which it has been a technical impossibility to place Child and mother in any kind of mutual relationship.[51] And when, in exceptional cases, the mother rests beside her Child, no motherly pride or affection has been expressed in her bearing. She stares straight in front of her, with a gaze which often seems sorrowful and gloomy, and which gave some interpreters occasion to assert that she was oppressed by presentiments of the sufferings her Son would have to experience.[52]

It should be added, however, that it is only during a comparatively primitive period of art that the severe and stiff Madonna-type is met with in representations of the Holy Night. It is indeed still to be found in Niccolò Pisano's pulpit at Pisa, where Mary, in a posture worthy of Juno, lies outstretched before the manger, with eyes directed out into space in a calm gaze, as if she were quite unmoved by the great event. But already by Niccolò's son, Giovanni Pisano, motherliness has been expressed by the beautiful gesture with which the Virgin lifts the veil from the Child's bed, in order to look with joy and love at its face. In

later art it has often been attempted to represent Mary's feelings towards her new-born babe by the aid of the same movement. Thus the lifting of the veil has become the subject of manifold variations: the gesture is a solemn one in the relief on Orcagna's tabernacle in Or San Michele at Florence, melancholy in the façade sculptures of the Duomo at Orvieto, and graceful in Raphael's famous Madonna in the Palazzo Pitti. However mutually unlike these compositions may be, in all of them the ceremonial element has been completely overcome by the expression of a purely motherly tenderness.[53]

In the history of those works which represent the Virgin with the Child at her bosom, a similar development may be observed from a Church severity to a humanly poetic conception. In the earliest sculptures and paintings there is no relationship between the God and the earthly woman, and, although He sits upon her lap, He appears to be as far apart from her as when, in the pictures of the Holy Night, He lies in His manger above or behind the resting Madonna.

Only by degrees were the two figures brought into connection with each other. The decisive step was taken during the eleventh or twelfth century, when Mary was made to carry the Child on one of her arms. This made it possible for Mother and Son to look at each other, but it was long before a closer connection between them was portrayed. Guido da Siena's great painting in the Town Hall of his native city is—if, as the inscription says, it really was painted in 1221—one of the first compositions in which any expression of real motherhood can be observed in the Madonna.[54] Nevertheless this Mary still stares almost absently out of the picture. It is only in the statues of Giovanni

Pisano that the Virgin turns towards the Child, and their glances meet familiarly. As soon as this arrangement had been discovered, the group acquired a far greater intimacy. The mother looks into the Child's eyes, sometimes with sad affection, and sometimes with arch joy, and the Child reaches up towards His mother to finger her dress or to feel her crown. Sometimes He plays with objects that Mary offers Him : an apple which, according to the theological interpretation, He will bless, to take away the curse brought by Eve upon the fruit; some grapes, which refer to His own blood in the transformation of the Sacrament; or a little bird, which is a symbol for the soul.[55] It also happens that He rubs His hands against the Virgin's cheeks or takes hold of her chin to win from her a caress, and she fulfils with affection His desires. Thus the pictures of the Madonna become during the Renaissance so realistically vivid that their high and mystic meaning is quite lost in an atmosphere of human tenderness.

For an outsider it is not easy to decide where the line is to be drawn between the expression which harmonises with the Church's view, and that which is too life-like to be approved of by orthodox Catholics. Joy is not considered in itself condemnable in religious pictures, just as it is not banned in religious poetry, and tenderness is described in exalted terms even by the preachers. But when, as is the case with many of the late Renaissance painters in Italy, and with the French sculptors of the end of the thirteenth century, the Madonna's joyful playing with her Child becomes a coquettish archness, and when the caressing becomes a "mignardise," then art indeed loses its religious character. The faithful probably feel best satisfied by compositions in which they see a motherly love

combined with reverence for God, for Mary adores her Child in a more literal sense than any human mother has ever worshipped her first-born. There are, indeed, some gestures in which this very characteristic of the Madonna's tenderness is clearly expressed, and which, therefore, wherever they are represented, give the pictures a Catholic and religious character. When Alessio Baldovinetti, for example, painted the Virgin looking down at the Child in her lap with lowered eyes and a translucent light over her face, we recognise that there is devotion in her love.[56] We are reminded of Crashaw's ingenious conceit, "'Twas once look up, 'tis now looke downe to heaven."[57] We seem also to see how modest and careful was Mary's way of treating her Child when we look at any of the pictures—those of Fra Angelico, for example—in which the mother does not kiss her little one, or embrace Him, but only lightly rubs her cheek against His head.[58] There is tenderness in this caress, but there is also a modest reserve, showing that even to His own mother the Child is a god more than a child.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SORROWING MOTHER

. . . . . .

Der Mutter Antlitz blaszt in Todesschauer,
Die thränenlosen Augen sind verglommen,
Ihr stummer Mund vermag nicht mehr zu flehen.

Kein sterblich Weib erfuhr so tiefe Trauer.
Das prophezeit' ihr einst das Wort des Frommen:
Es wird ein Schwert durch deine Seele gehen.

A. W. SCHLEGEL, *Mater dolorosa.*

FROM the period immediately following the Divinity's birth, the Church has selected three events for commemoration: the Circumcision, the homage of the Magi, and the Purification or Presentation in the Temple. Of these events, the homage of the Magi, as has already been mentioned, was often rendered in early Christian art in connection with the miracle of the Holy Night. In the Church calendar, however, "the day of the three kings" is marked by a special festival two weeks after Christmas; and, in spite of exceptions occurring in the production of the first centuries, both art and poetry have as a rule made the greeting of the Wise Men the subject of special compositions, which differ in their whole character from the pictures and poems which refer to the birth. While "the worship at the manger" is conceived as an idyllic scene, where the pious parents and the simple peasants adore the new-born God-man, the so-called Epiphany is invariably

treated in the style of a festival. Here, what has to be visualised is a meeting between earthly power, which reveals itself in outer and visible pomp, and that higher power which concealed itself in the person of the little child. In proportion as art developed, such a thought was more and more clearly emphasised.[1]

Thus, during the Middle Ages, the Wise Men were given crowns instead of the oriental caps or mitres which they wear in the early Christian pictures, and in literature they are more often spoken of as kings than as Magi. Like vassals in the act of *homage*, they bow meekly before the sovereign, the "rex regum," whose empire is greater than any earthly sovereignty. By the gifts they offer they express their reverence to each of the dignities which distinguish the Divine Child. Caspar, the eldest of them, brings gold to the king; Melchior, incense to the God; and Balthasar, salves and balsam to the man who will experience and conquer death and suffering. He is all the more fitted to carry these signs of sorrow, because he himself is a representative of the Camites, the black race oppressed by Noah's curse, and he comes last in order because his people were the last to partake of Christianity. Melchior, on the other hand, stands for the race of Japhet, *i.e.* the Aryans, who showed themselves the most receptive of the doctrine of the divinity of the Saviour. The oldest king is, of course, a Semite, who hands over the kingly crown of the chosen people to the Jewish Messiah. Thus, according to this interpretation, the greeting of the Magi is equivalent to the homage of all mankind, *i.e.* of all the known races, to the divine Saviour.[2]

It is only natural that the little Child should occupy a position in keeping with the solemnity of so great an occasion. It would not do to follow the example

given by the Florentine painters in their pictures of the worship of the *shepherds* by letting the God-man lie on the ground and suck His finger. At the visit of the kings, not only is His finger out of His mouth, but He understands how to raise it, with a kingly and priestly dignity, in a gesture of blessing towards His worshippers. He is the new Solomon, a prince who gives audience in His mother's lap. He sits on her knees, and leans benevolently, not to say graciously, forward towards the kneeling Caspar. The Madonna, again, is on this occasion no longer the poor girl who has given birth to her Child in a stable. She is loftily enthroned like a Mother of God. She often wears a royal dress, and occasionally, too, her head is adorned with a diadem or a crown. Sometimes a canopy has been raised over her place, sometimes she sits on a bishop's chair. It is especially in northern painting that the greatness of the Madonna has been emphasised by such outer arrangements. The Italian artists, on the other hand, have usually observed a simple form of composition, but even with them the Virgin as a rule has a stiff bearing which often gives an impression of indifference. Only during the Renaissance does her face begin to show a more mobile expressiveness. We see that she shares with interest in the homage to the little God, on whom she looks down affectionately, and she regulates His position with motherly care, so that Caspar may be able to kiss the foot of the Child.

According to Venturi, the stiff expression in the mediaeval pictures was due to the fact that the artists desired to represent the fear experienced by Mary when she was informed by the kings of Herod's threats. Such a fear on the part of the Madonna has indeed, as Venturi pointed out, been described in

religious poetry;[3] but predisposition is needed in order to discern any indication of this feeling in the sculptures or paintings. We do not often find in art any sign that Mary felt oppressed by the visit of the lofty princes. On the other hand, this characteristic has been set forth by those sacred poets who never lose any opportunity of praising the Madonna's humility. Thus, the author of *The Meditations of Bonaventura* says: "See further, how shy Our Lady is of talking to such great Lords. And how courteously she looked down while she spoke, for she did not like to be seen or to talk with them. But God gave her strength and power in this great affair."[4]

The Circumcision, the memory of which is celebrated on New Year's Day, has comparatively seldom been treated in art and poetry. It may, indeed, seem as if such an event were in itself too unimportant to be made an object of devout meditation. To a Catholic mind, however, even this act is full of significance. It was at the Circumcision that the Saviour received the name Jesus, which to His worshippers is so full of "sweetness, power, and greatness";[5] and at the Circumcision was first poured out that blood which on three later occasions—on the Mount of Olives, at the scourging, and on the Cross—was to flow for the sins of men. In those and in many other reasons, which are expounded at length by Jacobus de Voragine,[6] lay a sufficient cause for the Church to commemorate the day when the God-man submitted to the ritual of the Jewish race. It is quite intelligible, on the other hand, why the ceremony itself did not offer many motives suitable to artistic representation. Therefore, also, those painters who have treated this subject—the

compositions of Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, and Mantegna are the most famous[7]—have departed from historical accuracy in order to give the subject greater solemnity. They have portrayed the operation as taking place in a temple, and not, as was the Jewish custom, in the child's home; and they have further, as Abbé Barthélemy pointed out, been guilty of a disturbing anachronism in representing Mary as present in the Temple, although she would not have the right to enter the holy place until after the purification and sacrifice, forty days after the child's birth.[8] The way in which the Madonna's figure has been portrayed does not afford any opportunity for aesthetic or symbolical interpretations.

If Mary does not play an important part at the Circumcision, her place is all the more notable at the Presentation in the Temple.[9] The Virgin is the actual protagonist in this ceremony, in which in order that her miraculous motherhood might be concealed from the world, she underwent the same purification as other mothers.[10] Candlemas, which is celebrated in memory of this event, is therefore one of the great Madonna-festivals,[11] and among the pictures connected with the Presentation are some of the most important representations of Mary. One cannot speak or write of the Madonna-type in art unless one has studied such compositions as Giotto's "Purificatio" at Padua and Assisi, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's painting of the same subject in the Accademia, and Fra Angelico's fresco in the cloister of S. Mark's at Florence; for in the conception of this motive appears an important feature which has not come so clearly into view in any of the pictures referring to Mary's earlier life. The Mother hands her Child

over the altar to the old priest, who receives it with veiled arms, that his bare hands may not touch its purity. The pictures make an impression of quiet devotion by the mere affectionate reverence with which the Holy Child is handled; but the figure of Mary, as painted, for example, by Giotto, speaks of something in addition to this. When she has parted with her child, she stretches out her hands as if to lure it back, and gazes after it with a long look of yearning. In her bearing can be seen a clear harbinger of the expression predominant with her when she has become a *mater dolorosa*, and one feels all the more convinced of the correctness of such an interpretation of the pictures when one finds that in literature also the motive was treated as a sad and serious one.

According to Catholic criticism, S. Luke's narrative of the Presentation in the Temple contains a direct prophecy of the sufferings Mary was to live through. In the words spoken to her by the aged Simeon, we are told, the whole great drama that the Madonna was to experience was foreshadowed: "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;—(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke ii. 34-35). In the Catholic Bible, the *Versio vulgata*, these obscure words are translated in a more explicit sense: "Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius"—"And his sword shall pierce through thy soul." His, *i.e.* the Saviour's sword, could, according to the commentators, only be understood as the lance which pierced Jesus' body at the Crucifixion. By this explanation Mary's visit to the Temple became associated with her suffering at

Golgotha, and the words of Simeon caused the Madonna to be placed in a closer connection with her Son's sacrificial death than the canonical text would in itself have justified: "Ferrum lanceae militaris latus quidem Salvatoris, animam vero transivit Virginis Matris" [12]—"The point of the soldier's lance pierced at once the Saviour's side and His Virgin Mother's soul." On the basis of this combination of passages a special moment was even invented in the Passion Story, the so-called Transfixion, when "the sword went through Mary's heart." [13] It is this moment that is sung of in the great Good Friday hymn :—

Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrymosa
Dum pendebat Filius,

Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.

The Transfixion at Golgotha, however, belongs to a later stage in the Madonna's life. The "sword in her heart," which Mary experienced during her visit to the Temple, was only due to a presentiment of future disasters; but the forewarning as such was a real pain, in which all the Madonna's coming sorrows lay enclosed as in a seed. The Presentation in the Temple was regarded as the first station on the way of her suffering, and this event has therefore, as an introduction to the long series of sorrows, been the subject of many pious meditations and religious outpourings. Such meditations on Mary's temple-going became more common than ever, when in the thirteenth century it was made a task for devotion to seek in imagination to live through Mary's so-called *seven sorrows*. Just as, with a preference for the mystical number, seven

joyful events had been distinguished in Mary's life—the Annunciation, the Birth, the homage of the Magi, Jesus' appearance after the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Whitsun miracle, and Mary's Assumption—so seven sorrowful events were compiled in a corresponding series. This series consisted of: (1) Simeon's prophecy; (2) the flight into Egypt; (3) the search for Jesus in Jerusalem; (4) the meeting with her Son on the way to Golgotha; (5) the Saviour's death; (6) the descent from the Cross; and (7) the burial.[14] These seven sorrows formed together a *Via Matris*, corresponding to the Saviour's *Via Crucis*. In the same way as people ought, in imitation of Christ, to place themselves in His situation at every stage of His suffering, so, in worshipping the Madonna, they ought in imagination to follow in her footsteps through all her experiences. For the Servite monks it was absolutely a form of divine service to think devotionally on the seven sorrows. Religious art, again, naturally strove to represent these situations, which had become so familiar to all believers through devotional literature. Small song-cycles were written, in which each separate strophe referred to one of the seven joys or sorrows.[15] These selected events were also portrayed in small pictures arranged side by side on one and the same great canvas, or each of the different sorrows was represented in a little frame of its own, the separate pictures being united as medallions on a single ribbon.[16] There even exist some costly mediaeval rosaries with beads which can be opened, and which contain inside small carved representations of one of the joys or sorrows of Mary.[17]

The *first sorrow*, which forebodes and includes all the rest, is usually represented by a picture of Mary before the altar, being addressed by the aged Simeon, but there

are many works in which a purely symbolical method of illustrating the Biblical story has been employed. Thus in mediaeval manuscripts, as in pictures and sculptures, we often find representations of a solitary upright Madonna with a sword stuck through her breast. During the Middle Ages people were satisfied with one sword only, which referred either to Simeon's words or to the mother's suffering at the Cross; but later, attempts were made to include the whole long line of sorrows in the pictures, *i.e.* a special weapon was introduced for each of the seven griefs. Thus arose those bizarre pictures and images in which the Virgin carries a whole set of swords stuck in her bosom. Where the images were sufficiently large, all the sorrows represented by the respective weapons were set forth in medallions on the pommels of the swords. The symbolism had reached its culmination, but the artistic effect suffered from a striving after a too complex expressiveness.[18]

The *second of Mary's sorrows* was caused by the Flight into Egypt. In the canonical Gospels this event is but shortly described, but the legends treat it all the more fully. The apocryphal *Book of the Childhood of our Lord Jesus*, especially, contains a number of fabulous anecdotes concerning the adventures of the Holy Family on the journey.[19] These stories, however, have no direct nor indirect importance in the Madonna's history. It is unnecessary, therefore, to pause over the miracle of the idols which were shattered when the Holy Child passed by—or over that of the cornfield which grew up in a single night, so that the sowers could truthfully answer Herod's emissaries that they had not seen any family like the one pursued "since they had sown their corn"—or over the tale of the robber who, moved by the Child's innocence and

the mother's beauty, harboured the holy fugitives in his cave and, as a reward for his hospitality, received the privilege thirty-three years later of being crucified on the right hand of the Divinity. Of greater interest is the story of the miracle performed by the Holy Child when He commanded a palm-tree to bow its crown to the ground, so that Mary could slake her thirst with its fruit,[20] for it is significant that with this, His first miracle, the Saviour does a service to His mother. Therefore the palm-tree of the legend, which is often represented in pictures of the Flight into Egypt,[21] affords a proof of the good relationship which reigned between the Holy Mother and her Divine Child, and which, according to tradition, prevailed during all the stages of the Saviour's life.

As regards this relationship the New Testament narrative is altogether too meagre to satisfy the believers. They could not imagine that He, who had been a model of all human virtues, had not also been a good and affectionate Son, and that she, who had borne the most perfect of all children, had not guarded and loved it more affectionately than any other mother. Pious visionaries, therefore, painted in imagination a communion between mother and Son which was more loving than any human relationship, and they described with close details Mary's way of fostering the little God. If the authors themselves had experienced the joys and sorrows of parentage, they introduced, perhaps unconsciously, their own recollections into the tales of the perfect mother.

It was by such an unintentional act of composition that S. Birgitta built, out of dreams and her own experiences, a description which is so just in its realism, that

the fiction becomes as convincing as any reality. There is a true motherliness in the manner in which the Swedish Abbess makes Mary tell of all her Son's marvellous qualities. She describes in detail His little body, the whiteness of His limbs, His purity and His good behaviour from the very first day of His life. She does not even fail to say that "there was never any disorder nor any uncleanliness nor any insects in His hair."[22] We see how motherly pride satisfies itself in that garrulous talkativeness which is so unintelligible and wearisome to all childless people, and so inexhaustibly interesting to all mothers. We understand the naïve circumstantiality with which Mary describes how "with tears of sorrow and bitterness" she clothed her Child in the tunic which she knew would be taken away from Him at His Passion—that tunic, she adds bitterly, "for which they who crucified Him cast lots, and none had that tunic while He lived but He alone."[23] And we are moved above all by the evident satisfaction with which the mother speaks of all the filial solicitude and all the proofs of affection that the God-man gave her.

Birgitta's visions of the relationship between the Madonna and her Son are unsurpassed in their naïve intimacy—probably just because she who had experienced the visions was herself a mother, who had had to bury some of her own children. But there are in mediaeval literature many other authors who completed the Gospel narratives with equally detailed, if with less life-like descriptions of the mutual affection of Mary and her Divine Son. In *The Meditations of Bonaventura*, for example, a lengthy account is given of many everyday details in the life of the Holy Family, and of many small occurrences, unnoticed in the Bible,

by which the Child's obedience and His mother's affection are shown. We learn—to return to the Flight into Egypt—that during their residence in a foreign country the Virgin supported her family by working at the spinning-wheel and by sewing for hire.[24] We read of how, when confronted by her *third sorrow*—the Search for Jesus in Jerusalem—she sorrowed over the loss of her Child, and of her joy when she found Him in the Temple; and one is specially struck by the way in which the meeting between mother and Son is described. "The boy," it runs, "immediately went forward to her, and she took Him affectionately to her bosom, and kissed Him lovingly and laid her face against His, and holding him to Her breast she rested an hour with Him."[25] It is seen that on this occasion also Mary employs the same characteristic caress which has been so often portrayed in artistic representations of the Madonna and her tender Child.

It is a significant addition to S. Luke's Gospel that the boy, as soon as He sees His mother, of His own accord goes to meet her. As in this example, so on the whole no opportunity was missed of showing how happy the Son was in Mary's company. Therefore the author of "Bonaventura's" *Meditations* has specially mentioned that Our Lord, when leaving the marriage at Cana to begin His work of teaching, first wished to accompany His mother to her home: "For such an escort should Our Lady have: See now how humbly they go home on foot, and how sweetly they walk together—Mother and Son."[26]

An instance, still finer in its naïveté, of God's love for His earthly home is given in the chapter of the *Meditations* dealing with the forty days in the wilderness. When the temptations were over, says the author, the

Saviour was fed by angels, but we are not told in the Scripture with what kind of food He was fed. We cannot suppose, however, that the angels brought any earthly food from heaven, and it is still less conceivable that Jesus should have performed a miracle merely to satisfy His own bodily necessities. Neither did He need to take any unusual step, for He well knew where He could get the meal He liked best. "Therefore He said to the angels, 'Go to my dear mother, and get and bring me what she has just prepared. For I eat no food so gladly as hers.' Then two of the angels betook themselves and were at the same hour with Mary. They greeted her reverently and proffered their message. And they took what little she had prepared for herself and Joseph, together with bread and a napkin and whatever is needed for a meal, and brought it all to the Lord. And Our Lady took care to procure some small fishes, and when she had got them she sent them by the angels to her Son."[27]

The intimacy of the relationship between Mary and the Saviour appears most clearly, however, on those occasions when the Son is compelled to separate Himself from His mother. Thus Bonaventura [?] has described how the Virgin takes leave of Jesus with tears, when at the age of twenty-nine He leaves His home to begin His work of teaching;[28] and he has written a long chapter on that other parting—which is even sadder, because both know that it is irrevocable—when the Saviour goes forth to celebrate the last Easter-festival at Jerusalem.[29] At this farewell, which has been represented pictorially by Dürer, Correggio, and Lotto, among others, Mary definitely takes on that expression of a "Mother of Sorrows" which predominates with her during all the great events of the Passion Story.[30]

The drama of the Passion, as is well known, is introduced by Mary's *fourth sorrow, i.e.* the meeting between the mother and the bearer of the Cross on the way to Golgotha.[31] S. Luke's account of how the Saviour turned to the weeping women has given artists an opportunity of bringing Mary into close contact with the condemned man. For she has been given a place at the head of the crowd, and consequently it is she who first meets the Saviour's eye. In the compositions of Giotto and his successors a severe dignity marks the silent meeting of Mother and Son. He walks erect, bearing His Cross over His shoulder, and she likewise stands upright when she answers His look. Only by wringing her hands does she show the grief that is rending her. In Raphael's "Spasimo," on the contrary, and in the late Renaissance pictures, the Saviour sinks under the Cross, and Mary falls to the earth at His side. This arrangement is more dramatic than the compositions of the earlier painters, but Catholic criticism prefers the Trecento view, in which the religious and divine element is better recognised.

When at the foot of the Cross Mary witnesses God's death-struggle, her suffering has reached its culmination. One is apt to imagine that this *fifth sorrow* could not have been represented either in picture or poem otherwise than as a violent emotion. Even with regard to this motive, however, the Church writers have striven to impress on artists the necessity of observing a strict and dignified reserve. In pictorial representations of the Crucifixion, therefore, may be observed the same opposition between a hieratically stiff and a dramatically expressive conception which has so often been referred to in the preceding chapters.

In the few Passion scenes which are to be met with in early mediaeval art, both the Crucified and His mother have been given a quiet bearing, free from suffering. So far as the Madonna is concerned, this is due in many cases to the fact that her figure fills a purely symbolical function. She is expressionless, because she is an idea and not a human being; for in pictures of the Passion Mary often represents the Christian Church, whose empire commences at the moment when the synagogue—which is represented on the opposite side of the Cross by the apostle John—is shattered at the death of the sacrificial Lamb.[32]

It would be incorrect, however, to apply this symbolical explanation to all the earlier mediaeval representations of the Passion. There are many compositions in which the artists clearly desired to give purely historical descriptions of the sad scenes of Good Friday, but even in these pictures we seek in vain for any expression of that violent grief which one imagines the Holy Mother to have experienced. Mary does not weep, and her body is undisturbedly dignified and erect. She only puts her hand to her cheek to rest her weary head, or raises her mantle to her face as if to conceal her sorrow. It might be supposed that the artists represented these gestures of still and restrained grief—which were perhaps borrowed from antique models[33]—because they felt their technical inability to render violent outbursts of feeling. It would, however, be a misapprehension to assume only some such external reasons for the dignified character which marks the earliest pictures of "Maria juxta crucem." It was a predominant conception of the Madonna which was thus reflected in art. The faithful wished to think that she, who had borne her Child without pain and who

had been freed from all the impurity and infirmities of human nature, could also lose her Child without being broken by sorrow. She was a pattern of moral self-control, as of all other virtues. In this connection she is invoked by Ambrosius in his elegy on the death of Valentinianus: "Durum quidem funus videtis, sed stabat et sancta Maria juxta crucem Filii, et spectabat Virgo sui unigeniti passionem. *Stantem illam lego, flentem non lego*"—"I read that she stood [at the Cross], but I do not read that she wept."[34] These words of the old Church Father have often been quoted in support of criticism of those art-works in which Mary sinks to the earth in sorrow, and many reasons have been advanced for the contention that the Madonna could not have failed to preserve her dignity even at her Son's death.[35] Just as the orthodox aestheticians will not permit the Holy Mother to be portrayed at her child-birth as lying or resting upon a bed, so they are unwilling to admit that she should be represented otherwise than in an erect position at the Crucifixion.[36]

As has already been mentioned, however, it is only in earlier mediaeval art that the demands of Church aesthetics for stoicism in expression have been fully complied with. In contrast to the emphasis laid by the early Fathers on the courage and self-restraint of the Madonna, a new conception arises, according to which Mary not only suffered at the Cross, but also expressed her suffering in lamentations. This view becomes prominent in literature earlier than in art; and, as is generally the case with the literary treatment of holy subjects, such an emotional element is in the first centuries more developed in the Eastern Church than among Roman Catholics.

Thus in an old Syrian poem which, probably incorrectly, bears the name of Ephraim Syrus, Mary is described as weeping and lamenting over "her heart's deep wound."[37] Her suffering receives here as dramatic an expression as does her mother's joy in the Birth Songs of the great Oriental bard which have already been quoted. In Greek literature we meet with a similar treatment of the Madonna's "fifth sorrow," which is dramatic also in form. In the old poem, "The Suffering Christ," which was long ascribed to Gregorius of Nazianz, more than half the verses consist of an almost unbroken monologue, in which the Mother of God gives expression to her sorrow. In its form, this, the oldest of Christian dramas, is an imitation of classical tragedy. A great number of verses have even been copied, with unimportant alterations, from the tragedies of Euripides.[38] It is only natural, therefore, that Christian martyr-heroism does not show forth in the portrayal of the Virgin's grief. In some editions of the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (also called the *Acta Pilati*), a Greek work thought to date from the fifth century, it is related that the Madonna fell unconscious on the way to Golgotha, and that at the Cross she wept in despair.[39] And in those lyrical poems that are named *Staurotheotokia*, the Holy Mother is described as crying in a loud voice. In one of them it is even said that she tears her hair in an excess of anguish.[40]

So far as is known to us, no such descriptions of the Madonna's sorrow occur in Latin literature throughout the first ten centuries.[41] The only analogy to the Greek poems that we are able to quote is the "Meditations upon Christ's Suffering," which has been ascribed to Bede, and in which it is related how Mary weeps from

sorrow and confides her Son to God, and, after His death, falls on her face to the ground.[42] It is impossible to say, however, whether the work actually dates from the time of Bede or from a much later period. All that can be definitely asserted is that from the commencement of the twelfth century religious authors began with a marked predilection to observe the Madonna's anguish and her share in her Son's suffering upon the Cross.[43] This was due not merely to the fact that from this time Mary occupied a more and more lofty place in Christian devotional life. It was also based to a large extent on the dogmatic assumptions, to the effects of which we have frequently had occasion to refer. The old Doketist heresy, which had so often been refuted and which nevertheless always came to the front in some new disguise, was at work in the explanation of the Passion-drama. However zealously the dogmatists sought to impress the fact that the Saviour was a real human being at the same time that He was a God, people could not imagine that the Almighty even in His earthly shape had suffered in a death-struggle. They could not but think that, had He only desired it, He could have made an end of His anguish, or at least have won comfort from the consciousness that His death was a passing thing.[44]

Mary, on the contrary, was a human being like all others, and her unhappiness was therefore quite intelligible. The more intimately the relationship between Mother and Son was conceived, the more profoundly must she be imagined to have partaken of His suffering. Thus was reached the conclusion—which has, of course, been of inestimable importance in the development of the Madonna-cult—that by her

sorrows the Virgin actually had a share in the work of Atonement. S. Birgitta, for example, in one of her visions makes the Saviour say: "And therefore I wish to say that my Mother and I saved mankind as with one heart, I suffering in body and heart, and she suffering the heart's sorrow and love." [45] In another vision the Saviour pays this tribute to His mother: "I bear thee witness that thou [didst suffer] more and bear more agony in the hour of my death than any martyr." [46] And Mary herself explains: "For as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so we redeemed the world with a heart." [47]

In the *Meditations of Bonaventura*, indeed, Mary is not spoken of as assisting in the Redemption, but her suffering at Golgotha is set forth as emphatically as by Birgitta. "The grief and sorrow of Mary," we are told, "increased greatly her Son's anguish, and He pitied her tribulations more than His own. And well may it be said that she suffered on the Cross with her Son, for she would have chosen to die with Him rather than to survive Him." [48] She suffers agony with the Crucified One, and prays to God that His anguish may at least be lightened—for she no longer dares to ask to have Him back alive. He, again, entrusts her to His Father's care, and points out how innocently she suffers, "for I was to be crucified and not she." He has such a loving solicitude for her that He avoids every word which might increase her sorrow. It is for this reason, says the author of the *Meditations*, that he said to John: "Behold thy Mother," but to Mary: "*Woman*, behold thy Son." For He would not address her by the dear word "Mother," lest "in her affectionate love she should grieve even more than before." [49]

In the monological, and sometimes dialogical form,

in which Mary's fifth sorrow is treated, the chapter on the Crucifixion in the *Meditations* corresponds with the so-called *Planctus* poems. These remarkable songs, which from the beginning of the twelfth century become more and more common both in Latin literature and in that of the modern languages, have so many points of contact with the Greek poems just alluded to, that it has even been supposed that they were directly influenced by them.[50] It is not necessary, however, to assume any such influence. The personal and intimate devotion, which appeared in Catholicism during the thirteenth century, must naturally have led people in imagination to dramatise—we use the term in its widest meaning—the events of the sacred history. Meditations were directed more than ever before to the drama of the Passion, and in this drama, for the reasons already given, attention was above all paid to the part of the *human mother.* When by pious imagination her sorrow had been made one's own, it was inevitable that the utterances of poetry should become more human and more passionate than the old orthodoxy would have permitted. Thus arose the essentially, and often formally, dramatic *Lamentations of Mary* or *Planctus,* which offer so striking a resemblance to the Syrian Good Friday hymns and the Greek *Staurotheotokia.*

S. Ambrosius would certainly have had much to criticise in this kind of Mary poetry. In the Planctus songs the Mother of God does not refrain from weeping, nay, she even weeps tears of blood. She stands by the Cross, indeed, but she also time after time falls unconscious, and she loses her self-control in repeated shrieks of woe. The extent of her suffering appears in the prayer—which occurs in most Planctus and also in the lately quoted

extract from S. Birgitta's visions—that she herself may die rather than have to survive her Child. The intimateness of her feeling is seen in the bitterness with which she recalls in memory all the joy which the Crucified had given her from His tenderest infancy. Motherhood thus finds a natural and purely human expression in the Madonna's hopeless despair, but there is nothing of the dignity of the God-bearer in her lamentation, and still less is there any Christian resignation. In this respect all the Planctus songs differ from that great hymn which corresponds with them in subject, and which has therefore often been wrongly denominated a "Lamentation of Mary."[51] *Stabat mater dolorosa* is sadder than any other of the chants of sorrow of the Catholic Church; but it reveals to us not so much Mary's own lamentation, as the sympathising grief of the unknown poet. The Madonna is represented indeed as sorrowing, groaning and weeping, but she does not break out in shrieks. This reserve contributes more than anything else to the lofty and imposing character of the hymn.

The artistic representations were of course in many respects influenced by the literature concerning the lamentation of Mary. Planctus poetry indeed belonged to that branch of literature which no one could help knowing. In all the modern languages songs were sung about Mary's sufferings—at Church festivals, at the assemblies of the Franciscans, the Flagellants and the Laudesi, and at religious theatrical representations. The dramatic element in the form of these poems made them especially suitable for recitation at the great feasts. In many cases it even appears, from accompanying stage-directions, that the songs were originally intended for theatrical purposes.[52] In other cases, again, it has been

possible to show that they formed a kernel round which greater dramas were grouped. The religious theatre, again, as has often been pointed out, has exercised a direct influence on the compositions of pictorial art. It is therefore to be expected that we shall recognise in pictures and sculptures many of the gestures and expressions described in the Planctus poems.

As related above, however, it was long before the dramatic and emotional conception passed from literature into art. In the northern countries people still preferred in the thirteenth century to represent the Madonna as unbroken by her grief. In Italy, on the other hand, where the great devotional movements influenced aesthetic production almost immediately, the figure of Mary received a humanly agitated expression even during this century. In his treatment of the Crucifixion, Giotto himself portrayed the Madonna's *spasimo*, though in such a way that in the excess of her grief she yet retained her lofty dignity.[53] Later, her fainting became a common motive, which was repeated numberless times in Italian, German, and Dutch pictures of the Crucifixion. At the same time, in pictures of a symbolic rather than an historical character, the old stiff arrangement was still employed, according to which the Madonna and John stand upright on either side of the Cross.[54] In some Renaissance pictures of this kind—such, for example, as Perugino's Crucifixions—the expression is so quiet and restrained that the bearing of the Madonna would satisfy even Ambrosius. During the later Renaissance the naturalistic treatment gains the upper hand both in the representation of the Crucified and of His mother, but even now artists usually avoid rendering the extreme emotions described in literature. Mary still retains in her sorrow that grace which always

distinguishes her movements, while the Magdalene on the contrary throws out her arms and distorts her features with violent shrieks.

The same contrast between the Madonna and the Magdalene in their mourning over the dead appears in the treatment of the *sixth sorrow*, *i.e.* the descent from the Cross and the preparations for burial. The latter, who was once a sinner, shows an almost earthly passion in the gestures by which she expresses her intense despair. Mary, too, is sorrowful in the presence of the dead, but at the same time she is quiet and restrained, and she embraces the corpse with that mild affection peculiar to motherhood. In this respect the descriptions of poetry and art correspond admirably.

According to an old legend, the Madonna herself assisted in the descent from the Cross. She loosened the Saviour's right arm and supported His body, while Nicodemus removed the nails from the left hand and the feet. Then she seized the Dead One's hands and kissed them and bedewed them with tears.[55] This motive has often been rendered in manuscript illustrations and reliefs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In some Western works of art—perhaps in connection with the directions given in the Greek "Painter's Handbook" from the monastery of Mount Athos—the Madonna is even made to receive the Saviour in her arms and kiss His face.[56] In the view of later ages it was inconceivable, however, that the sorrowing mother should have had sufficient strength to partake in a work which must have been too great a tax on her in both a physical and a mental sense. In the description in *The Meditations of Bonaventura*—which may have been the model, for example, for Niccolò Pisano's relief at Lucca—Mary

only takes the right hand of the dead Man, kisses it and holds it to her eyes;[57] but even compositions of this kind are exceptional. In the majority of Renaissance works the Madonna lies swooning on the ground while her son is being taken down from the Cross. Her motherly caresses are portrayed instead in connection with the later events which constitute the subjects of "The Lamentation of Christ" and of the so-called "Pietà" compositions.

The subject for these compositions is given in detail in *The Meditations of Bonaventura.* Soon after Our Lord had been taken down from the Cross, we are told, Joseph requested Mary that the dead body might be wrapped in a shroud and buried. But she would not part from Him, and asked that she might keep her Son a little longer. And she wept and dropped tears when she saw the wounds in His side and on His hands, and gazed at His face and His head that had been dealt with so discourteously and contemptuously. She plucked the hair from the wounds and removed the stiffened blood, the spittle and the tears, "and could not be satiated with the pitiful sight." But as it was now late in the evening John sought to persuade Mary to delay the burial no longer. Our Lady, who was reasonable and forbearing, kept her friends waiting no more but allowed them to shroud Our Lord as they wished. And she herself held His head in her lap, and prepared to wrap it up, while Magdalene with tears of sorrow washed "the feet at which she had found mercy." When they had shrouded the dead body they looked at Mary as if to ask that she should allow herself to be led to the grave, and thereat they all began to weep anew. And when she saw that she could delay no longer she *laid her face against her Son's* and said:

"My dearest Son, now I hold thee dead in my bosom. Hard is the band which death has to break. Glad and joyful was our communion. Without malice and ill-feeling we lived among men, and yet thou art now killed as he who has forfeited his life. Thy Father would not help thee and thou hast died for mankind. Where shall I go now? I desired to be buried with thee and may not be, but my soul is buried with thee." "And while she thus spake, she washed His face with the excess of her tears far more than the Magdalene had washed His feet, and then dried it, and kissed His mouth and eyes, and carefully wrapped His head in a napkin. Afterwards she blessed Him, and all fell upon their knees and prayed to Him and kissed His feet. Then they bore Him to the grave; Our Lady held His head and the Magdalene His feet, and the others bore Him in the midst." [58]

It is difficult to decide if it is this description which originally gave rise to the representations of Christ's burial, or if "Bonaventura's" narrative was influenced by ancient pictures and sculptures; but it is in any case certain that the *Meditations* exercised a decisive influence on pictorial art. We are reminded of the unknown author when we see the compositions of Cimabue, Loranzetti, Giotto, Fra Angelico, Perugino, and indeed of all the great Renaissance masters. The washing of the corpse with the tears of the holy women, the mother's kisses and embraces, and the sad procession to the place of burial have been represented numberless times in sculpture and painting. Still more often has that moment been rendered when Mary holds the dead body to her breast and, with the same caress that she had so often given the tender infant, strokes her face against His. Such a "pietà" forms

a complete correspondence, or rather contrast, to the pictures of the Virgin's mother-joy. We imagine that we see the Madonna dreaming herself back to the time when she used to play with her new-born child on her knee.

This resemblance between the two scenes has been set forth by some authors even more clearly than in the *Meditations*. According to the Revelations of Birgitta, Mary experienced when caressing the dead body the same joy as when she held her Child to her breast, "for she knew that her Son would die no more, but live eternally."[59] S. Bernard of Siena has given a still more ingenious interpretation of the story of Mary and the Saviour's body. The Madonna, he says, dreamed that it was her little Child which she held to her bosom. She rocked Him to and fro, and she covered Him in the shroud as if it had been swaddling-clothes.[60] There exist also some old sculptures which might be understood as illustrations of this thought, for in them the Saviour's body has been made so small that Mary can comfortably carry Him on her knee like a child. It is probable, however, that this manner of portrayal was due rather to technical limitations than to any deliberate purpose,[61] for the great artists have all represented the dead Man as tall and full-grown. Few of them, however, have succeeded in solving the problem of placing His figure on the Madonna's bosom gracefully. In some cases, as in the great picture of a Provençal master in the Louvre, the Saviour lies in an arch over Mary's knees, with His feet resting on the ground. In other compositions — such, for example, as Cosimo Tura's picture in the Museo Correr at Venice—the effect of seeing the tall body embraced like a little child in the arms of the aged mother is absolutely grotesque.

Michelangelo alone, in his Pietà at S. Peter's, has succeeded in treating the subject in a powerful and dignified style. He has made the Madonna supernaturally great —rather like the antique Demeter—he has let the dead body attach itself gracefully to the lines of the mother's imposing shape, and he has given her countenance the quiet expression of a strong woman in her full and unspoiled beauty. As is well known, Michelangelo had to meet the criticism that he had represented the Mother of God as much too young in relation to her Son; but in the famous answer with which, in the presence of his friend Condivi, he met these objections, he proved that he had made his Church's view of the Madonna his own. "Do you not know," he said, "that pure virgins retain their good looks better than the impure? All the more must she have remained youthful, in whom stirred not the slightest sensuous desire that could affect her body. But I will say still more. We must also remember that such a freshness and youthful bloom, quite apart from its having been preserved in her in natural ways, had been brought about by a divine miracle, simply in order that her virginity as a mother and her eternal purity might be demonstrated to the world."[62] This view has by no means universally reigned among artists. Some of them—Crivelli may be mentioned as an example—have even made the Madonna much older than she was, according to the legends, at the time of her Son's death.[63]

Mary's participation in the burial, as has been said, forms the *seventh* of her sorrows. The renderings of this subject in art and poetry throw no new light upon the doctrine of the Madonna's personality. The only notable feature in the legend is that already touched

upon in an earlier chapter—namely, that the Virgin before returning to her home blesses the grave as the place in which God would for a time be enclosed in the same way that for nine months He had dwelt in her own womb.

From the grave, we are told, the mother betook herself to the place of execution and there prayed to the Cross on which her Son had rested. As, say the *Meditations*, she had been the first to worship the Divine Child, so she was also the first to perform her devotions at the Cross.[64] On the other hand, she was not among the pious, who three days later betook themselves to the grave with spices and ointments to do homage to the dead. Those artists who ascribed to her a share in that pious action have, according to Catholic critics, been guilty of misrepresenting the true facts. It ought not to be imagined, they tell us, that Mary felt any need of visiting the death-chamber. *She* was too firmly persuaded that her Son would soon rise again.[65] And to her, before any one else, it was revealed that He was alive again.

The pious worshippers of the Madonna have not been able to reconcile themselves to the idea that the God-man omitted to reveal Himself to Mary immediately after the Resurrection. In the Apocryphal legends, in devotional literature, and in the poems on Mary's life, the Bible narrative has been completed by a chapter on how the Saviour, in filial love and reverence, betakes Himself to His mother.[66] According to the Latin *Vita B. Virginis Marie rhythmica*, He even pays her two visits; first to inform her of His resurrection, and later to give her the promise of her own Assumption.[67] In one of S. Birgitta's visions the Madonna herself insists with emphasis that she had been gladdened by the

earliest appearance of her risen Son. "And," she says, "He was seen earlier by me who was His mother and grieved by inconceivable sorrow, than He was seen by any one else. And He appeared to me sweetly and affectionately, gladdening me and saying that He would ascend to Heaven in the sight of many. And although, for the sake of my humility, this has not been expressly written, yet it is the most certain truth that my Son when He arose from the dead showed Himself to me before any other person." [68]

Even this event in Mary's life, which introduces the series of her four last joys, has been described in detail by the author of the *Meditations* in a short and graphic chapter. It is interesting to see how even at this last meeting all the affection which existed between Mother and Son is condensed in expressions combining veneration and love. It was, we are told, early on the Sunday morning when Our Lord arose from the grave. His mother was sitting at home, praying to God that He would let her Son come back to her. He had promised to come on the third day, but still He was not there. "But while she thus prayed, so that the tears flowed from her heart's sweetness, suddenly Our Lord Jesus entered from one side—in whitest garments, with shining face, mild and glad and proud and full of honour—and said to her: 'Salve Sancta parens.' While she turned she said: 'Art thou my son Jesus?' And she fell on her knees and prayed to Him. He likewise fell on His knees and said: 'My sweetest mother, it is I; I have arisen from the dead and now am here with thee.' And when they arose she embraced Him with flowing tears of joy, and pressed Him close to her, and they *laid their faces side by side*, and she leaned upon Him and He supported her." [69]

It is in this position, with her face laid by His, and affectionately embracing Him, after first having prayed to Him on her knees, that the earthly mother should be thought of in connection with her Divine Child. She is familiarly tender with Him who was born of her womb, but she never forgets that He is a higher Being than she.

CHAPTER XX

MARY'S DEATH AND ASSUMPTION

Mortals, that behold a Woman,
Rising 'twixt the Moon and Sun;
Who am I the heavens assume? an
All am I and I am One.

Multitudinous ascend I,
Dreadful as a battle arrayed,
For I bear you whither tend I;
Ye are I, be undismayed!

I the Ark that for the graven
Tables of the Law was made.
Man's own heart was one, one Heaven,
Both within my womb were laid.

For there Anteros with Eros
Heaven with man conjoined was,
Twin stone of the Law, *Ischyros*,
Agios Athanatos.

FRANCIS THOMPSON,
Assumpta Maria (*New Poems*).

FROM the last chapters it should be clear that the Apocryphal literature is relatively poor as regards the period in Mary's life which coincides with the Saviour's activity as a teacher. The legends are principally attached to the canonical narrative, and they complete only those chapters in it which were thought to have been too scantily treated by the evangelists. The Passion Story itself has indeed been enlarged by the important additions of the Madonna's sufferings at the Cross and of the risen Saviour's visit to His mother; but concerning the whole time between Jesus' birth

and His death, the pious legends have little to tell us about Mary. The circle of miracle-stories which is associated with the Flight into Egypt does not add any notable features to her character. It seems thus as if religious authors had been shy of touching the narrative which had been treated in the canonical text; or it is perhaps more correct to say that they did not wish to write anything about Mary's life during the time her Son claimed the devout thoughts of the faithful for Himself alone. Before He had been born, Mary was a protagonist in the sacred story; but for as long as He was alive on the earth, she was thrust into the background in favour of the Divine Man. From the moment, however, when His earthly existence had ceased, Mary regained her rank as the foremost of all created beings, and the legend-writers were free to treat a subject in regard to which the canonical narratives had absolutely nothing to relate. Therefore there exists a rich circle of stories—comparable with the legends of the Madonna's birth and childhood—referring to this last stage of Mary's life.

Immediately after the departure of the God-man, His mother, according to the Catholic view, occupies a predominant place in the first Christian community. Tradition has in this case based itself on certain meagre indications in the canonical text, and boldly drawn conclusions from them. It has been attempted, by the aid of forcedly ingenious interpretations, to decipher hidden references to the Virgin in the apostolical letters;[1] and special weight has been laid on that passage in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in which it is expressly said that among those who assembled with the disciples for common prayer and devotion were Jesus' brothers and certain women and "Mary, the

mother of Jesus." It was easy, on the strength of this expression, to suppose that she had also been present at the festival of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was outpoured over the disciples. By the use of a somewhat freer interpretation, it could also be assumed that the Madonna had witnessed the mystery by which her Son had been taken up to Heaven. Therefore, ever since the fifth century her figure has been introduced in pictorial representations of the Ascension and the outpourings of the Holy Ghost. These events moreover, as we have already seen, have been regarded as the two last of Mary's seven joys.

In the earliest renderings of the Ascension Mary is often pictured as an *orant, i.e.* as a praying woman with outstretched hands. Her figure is here probably symbolical. She represents the society of the faithful, the Holy Church, and it is only natural, therefore, that she should occupy the central place in the compositions. During the later Middle Ages, when she was conceived of as a person and no longer as an idea, it might happen—as in the case of Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua—that Mary's figure was placed a little on one side; but the worship of the Madonna even at this time, and similarly during the Renaissance, usually led to her being given the foremost place in the pictures. In the representations of the miracles of Pentecost, moreover, in the earliest as in modern art, it is round the Madonna that the Apostles are grouped. Thus, if we judge by the tale told by pictures and sculptures we receive the impression that when their Master was absent, the faithful directed their reverence instead to His mother.[2]

There are also many Apocryphal legends, according to which Mary was an object of worship and venera-

tion even during her lifetime. In *De divinis nominibus*, a work by the half-mythical writer Dionysius Areopagita, we read of a visit that this disciple of S. Paul pretends to have paid to the Mother of God. "When John," we are told, "presented me to the sublime Virgin, I was surrounded by an infinite and divine light which penetrated me, and I was filled by such a stream of perfumes that neither my body nor my soul could bear this full and eternal blessedness. I felt my heart and senses fail me when I was overwhelmed by the majesty of her glory."[3] Such gorgeous descriptions are indeed exceptional in Mariologic literature, but the actual fact that Mary was visited by the faithful is mentioned time after time in the legends. The newly converted, we are told in mediaeval poems, betook themselves to Jerusalem in order to see her who had borne the Divinity in her womb, and to receive from her a confirmation in their faith. S. Paul remained some time with her before beginning his missionary journeys, and it was by the Mother of God herself that he was initiated into the mystery of the Incarnation. S. Luke, it is said, wrote his Gospel at Mary's dictation, just as with his brush he portrayed her features in those ancient pictures of the Madonna which, during the Ages of Piety, were thought to possess indisputable authenticity. Ignatius, John's disciple, exchanged letters with the Virgin on the Christian religion, the contents of which are still preserved for the edification of the faithful.[4] The Madonna also visited the believers herself when they could not come to her, and strengthened them both by her advice and by her mere presence. She healed the sick and brought the dead to life, and performed more miracles than any of the Apostles. But the greatest miracle was her own life.

For on the model of the Protoevangile's description of Mary's childhood, a pious story concerning the Virgin's last years was composed during the Middle Ages. Just as in her childlike innocence—so this legend made clear—she was a pattern for all young girls, so as an old woman she was "a mirror of virtue" for the Christian matron.

The same qualities which marked the infant Mary are distinctive of the character of the old woman, with the addition only of the dignity of advanced age. She continues to be so humble that she shows reverence for every one who comes in contact with her, and regards herself as inferior to all others. She is lovable, kindly, and easy of access in society; ready to give her sympathy to the unfortunate, but herself serene and mild. Although she avoids all superfluous talk, she is willing to speak of her Son, and by her tales converts many to a belief in Him. At the same time she is so shy that she shuns all great assemblies, and even in the Temple seeks for some inconspicuous corner. When she goes along the street on some pious errand, she walks with head bowed and eyes directed to the ground. Seldom does she look those who meet her in the face, but if she is greeted by them she always answers *Deo gratias, tibi pax.* Her dress is dignified and simple, and has never been either stained or torn since her Son left the earth. Her clothes and furniture are poor, but spotlessly clean, and clean is everything belonging to her or surrounding her.

In the whole of this description—which, with many details that are omitted here, may be read in the old poem *Vita Beate Virginis Marie et Salvatoris rhythmica*—the influence of the ascetic ideal of life can be easily recognised.[5] In diligence and exercises of

devotion, the Madonna was a model for all cloister sisters; but none the less it would be incorrect to liken her to a Christian nun. It appears from the poetical biography that Mary does not wear a penitential dress, since she had no need to be cured of any faults.[6] She did not kill nature in herself, because she was by nature absolutely pure. There was no overcoming in her life and no struggle with temptations; therefore she is not ascetically severe, but graceful, humorous, and serene as naïve virtue and original instinctive innocence. She is a perfect being, chosen to bear the Godhead in her womb. During her years of growth she was pure, since no pollution could cleave to the tabernacle in which the Highest was to take up His abode, and in her old age she was no less pure, because the temple could not be soiled in which He for a time had dwelt. Purity, again, was regarded in each case not only as a moral but also as a physical notion. Just as in the Protoevangile Mary was nourished with heavenly food, so, according to the *Vita rhythmica*, the aged Mother of God daily received angels who brought her bread from her Divine Son's table. No other food, we are told, might pass her lips. We see how the idea of the sanctity of the shrine prevails even in the last chapter of the biography of the Madonna.

This thought, however, receives its most notable expression in the legends of Mary's death and assumption. If people would not admit the possibility of anything earthly polluting the living temple, still less, of course, would they allow that this temple had been subjected to decay and transformation. That the God-man Himself suffered from all the conditions of human existence was an inevitable consequence of His sacrifice; He had to die to perform His work of Atonement, and in

order to convince men of His humanity He must undergo physical pains and humiliations. On the other hand, His mother, who was likewise free from sin and who was not under the necessity of making any sacrifice (beyond her suffering at the Cross), ought to have gone free from the punishment for sin. She had been born without spot, and brought her Child into the world without pains—therefore she ought also to be released from life without the death-struggle which forms the end of earthly beings. Just as her childbirth was not connected with anything impure, so after death her body ought not to have undergone any of the humiliating changes to which all other human beings are subjected. Pious feeling resisted the idea that that, which had been a home for the Divinity, should decay in the earth and be consumed by worms.

In the earliest Christian literature not many expressions of this view are to be found,[7] but it may be concluded that such a line of thought, even during the first centuries, unconsciously lay at the root of the faithful's idea of the Madonna. It is, indeed, significant that as late as the fourth century the Fathers of the Church do not apparently know anything as to the manner of the Virgin's departure. Accounts were written of the deaths of all the great saints, and relics were dug up of even the least important persons who had been mentioned in the sacred history. Only in the case of her who stood nearest the Divinity was there nothing to tell in this respect; it was not known, it was said, when she died or where she was buried, nor could the smallest relic of her body be shown. Such reticence, as Professor Lucius has pointed out, could only have been due to the fact that people were shy of the mere thought of the Madonna's death.[8] Pious imagination

sought some expedient which should release it from the necessity of associating the idea of the Mother of God with the idea of mortality. So long as such a way was not found, people refrained from speaking or writing about Mary's departure; but her death was openly recognised, and was made the object of devout meditations, as soon as a legend could be cited which served to explain away all that was natural and human in the event.

In this case also it was Eastern Christianity which provided the faithful with the fiction required. Experts have not indeed succeeded as yet in definitely deciding when and where the legend of Mary's death originally arose, but it is for many reasons considered most probable that it was some Syrian worshippers of the Madonna who composed from the old legends a new legend concerning the Virgin's last days. In any case it is from some Eastern country that the *Transitus sanctae Mariae* was introduced during the fifth century into the Roman Church. At first it spread slowly, and the Fathers expressed themselves unfavourably towards it; but this did not prevent the faithful from delighting in a legend that harmonised so well with existing ideas about the Virgin. Later, when in the seventh century a special festival—the 15th of August—had been established, on the oriental model, in commemoration of Mary's death, the narrative of her *Transitus*, or *Dormitio*, and her *Assumptio* won ever extending recognition. Artists and poets made no distinction between these new apocrypha, and the older canonical or apocryphal texts from which they derived motives for their works. Preachers, again, even if they did not directly introduce the oriental legend, made use of the stories related in it. Thus the idea that Mary even in

her death formed an exception to all other created beings, and that her body had been transported to Heaven, entered once for all into the minds of believers; and the legend of the Virgin's ascent into Heaven became the subject of numerous adaptations in the language of both the Church and the laity.[9]

It is not necessary to give an account of how all these variations differ. If we desire to give a clear and complete general view of the pious narrative, it is most advantageous to confine our attention to some one of the later versions which have borrowed features from many different sources. Of all these mediaeval compilations, again, none is so well known, and none has exercised so great an influence on art and poetry, as that which Jacobus de Voragine wrote for his great Saints' Calendar. It is, therefore, the text of the *Legenda aurea* that will here be summarised and commented upon.

When the Apostles—so the narrative begins—had dispersed in order to preach the Gospel to the heathen, the Virgin remained in her home, which lay at the foot of Mount Sion. She was, according to Epiphanius, seventy-two years old at this time; but Jacobus considers, on the strength of what Eusebius asserts, that she had not exceeded the age of sixty when she was taken up into Heaven.

Mary was now more alone than ever before, for on her recommendation John, too, had betaken himself on missionary journeys. She lived, it seems, as a perpetually sorrowing mother, in memory of those years when the Saviour was on earth, for, says Jacobus, "she did not cease to visit with assiduous piety those places that had been hallowed by her Son, *i.e.* where He had been baptised, where He had fasted, prayed, suffered,

and been buried, and that from which He had ascended into Heaven."[10] These pilgrimages, however, could not quench her yearning, and one day her longing to see her Son again became so strong that she burst into bitter weeping. "But then an angel appeared, surrounded by light, and greeted her reverently as his Master's mother, and said to her: 'Hail, blessed Mary! . . . Behold I bring thee a branch of a palm from Paradise, that thou must have borne before thy coffin after three days, for behold thy Son waits for His venerable Mother.' And Mary answered the angel: 'If I have found grace before thine eyes, I pray thee tell me thy name. But before all I beg thee that my sons and brothers, the Apostles, may be collected around me, so that I may see them before I die and give up my soul in their presence and be buried by them. And this, too, I beseech: that my soul, when it leaves my body, may not meet any evil spirit, and may not fall into the power of Satan.' And the angel answered: 'Why dost thou wish to know my name, which is great and venerable? But know that this day all the Apostles shall assemble here, and that in their presence thou shalt breathe out thy life. For He who once carried the prophet of Judah to Babylon by a lock of His hair needeth not more than a moment to bring all the Apostles to thy side. And for the evil spirit, thou hast nothing to fear from him, thou that hast crushed his head under thy foot and robbed him of all his might. But thy wish shall come to pass, and thou shalt not see him.' And when the angel had said this he ascended to Heaven, and the palm he had given Mary shone with a blinding light. It was a green branch, but its leaves were as bright as the morning star."[11]

It seems peculiar that Mary, who was guiltless,

should feel any fear of evil spirits and the power of the devil.[12] This passage in the legend has its explanation, however, if read in connection with the twelfth chapter of the Revelation of S. John. For it is there said (xii. 13-14) that the great dragon, *i.e.* the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, persecuted "the woman which brought forth the Man Child." And to the woman, it is said, "were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." The place of salvation was probably, as Renan conjectured, the little desert town of Pella, where the Christian Church, *i.e.* the woman with the Man Child, took refuge from the persecution of the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem.[13] This historical counterpart to the apocryphal image was unintelligible, however, to the later generations of Christians, and the woman of the Book of the Revelation—"clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (xii. 1)—was explained instead as a symbol of the Virgin Mary, who stood in perpetual conflict with the old serpent. It was, therefore, natural to suppose that the Madonna, when she learned that her end was approaching, was disquieted by the thought of the dragon's attack. On the other hand, there was contained in the Revelation a prophecy that the powers of death should not prevail against the woman; and it would have been no unusually free interpretation had the prophecy been taken to mean that the Madonna had ascended on the wings of the eagle to the Child who had gone up to Heaven before her. Professor Lucius, at any rate, has attempted to show that the verses in the Revelation concerning the woman and the

dragon were one of the original sources of the legend of Mary's Assumption.[14]

The story of the angel comforting Mary by recounting her victory over the devil is based on a remarkable misinterpretation of another passage in the Bible. The great prophecy in Genesis: "It (*i.e.* the woman's seed) shall bruise thy (*i.e.* the serpent's) head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," has been rendered in the Vulgate by "Ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus"—"*She* shall bruise thy head, etc." This erroneous translation has naturally contributed to increase the weight laid on Mary's share in the Redemption,[15] and it has also had its importance for the artistic representation of the Madonna. Just as, in connection with the recently quoted verses from the Revelation, she was portrayed as a star-crowned figure surrounded by light and standing upon a half-moon, so too she has also been made to trample upon a crawling serpent.

The actual vision of the angel is, of course, a copy of the narrative of the Annunciation. There must have been something attractive to religious imagination in the idea that the Madonna's death and reunion with her Son were introduced by a message similar to that of the Incarnation, by which she was first united with the Godhead. Strangely enough, however, the latest Annunciation has seldom been illustrated. The most famous and important treatment of this motive is to be found in one of the reliefs round Orcagna's tabernacle in Or San Michele at Florence.[16] Mary is here represented as an old woman with a widow's cap over her head. Her countenance wears a grave expression, showing that she has experienced many trials since she received Gabriel's greeting; but otherwise her position is the same as in the pictures of the "Annunciation of the

Virgin." She sits with a book on her knees, as then, and now, too, her right hand is raised in a defensive movement towards her neck. The palm-branch in the angel's hand is the differentiating characteristic of the later angel visit. More clearly than this attribute, however, the grave demeanour of the giver and receiver of the message is witness to the fact that it is a greeting of death, and not of life, which is this time brought to the Madonna.

In the matter of the angel's gifts to Mary, the various forms of the legend do not agree. The poetical biography of Mary, *Vita rhythmica*, for example, makes the messenger give the Madonna not only a green branch, but also a winding-sheet, sewn by angelic hands.[17] Again, the palm-branch, which corresponds to the lily-stem in the first Annunciation, is, according to Jacobus de Voragine, plucked in the groves of Paradise. In another version, on the other hand, it comes from the tree that bowed its crest to the Madonna and her Child during the flight into Egypt.[18] As a reward for its obedience the palm received a promise that it should never be withered up; and after one of its branches had been borne before the Virgin's coffin, the entire tree was taken up into the garden of Paradise, where it provides the saints with palms of victory.[19]

In the chapter on the Death-Annunciation there is nothing further to comment upon, except the angel's mention of the prophet who had been carried by his hair from Judah to Babylon. These words refer to the story of Ezekiel (viii. 3 and xi. 24), who was transported to and fro between his place of exile and his mother-city. God was now to perform a similar miracle, for Mary's sake, with His Apostles, but on this occasion He did not employ so harsh a method as in the case of the Jewish

prophet. For it happened, we are told in the continuation of Jacobus de Voragine's narrative, that on the same day, while John was preaching in Ephesus, the sky suddenly rumbled, and a white cloud seized the Apostle, and carried him through the air to Jerusalem, to the threshold of Mary's house.[20] He was greeted with tears of joy by the Virgin, who told him of her imminent death, and bade him take care of her body, that the Jews might not gain possession of it. John replied, regretting that the other disciples were not present to partake in the funeral and praise Mary's name; but he had not finished speaking when all the Apostles, at all the different places where they were preaching, were lifted up by white clouds and carried to Jerusalem. They were at first utterly astonished at finding themselves assembled outside Mary's home, but John explained to them why God had brought them back to the sacred city, and warned them not to weep when Mary died, in order that the people might not be disturbed in their faith by seeing that they who preached of the Resurrection to others were themselves afraid of death.

Mary, however, prepared for her death. She sat in the midst of the Apostles, and had lamps and candles lit around her. Thus she devoutly waited for her Son to receive her soul. At the third hour of the night Jesus Himself came, followed by legions of angels, troops of patriarchs, armies of martyrs, cohorts of confessors, and choirs of virgins. The whole of this heavenly host grouped itself before Mary and sent up pious hymns. At first, we are told, Jesus said to His mother, "Come, my chosen one, to my throne, for I long for thy beauty," and Mary answered, "Lord, my soul is ready." Then those who came with Our Lord sang softly in the

Madonna's praise. But Mary sang: "All generations shall call me blessed; for He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name." (As we see, the legend makes the Virgin repeat a part of the hymn of praise which, according to S. Luke's Gospel, she sung at her visit to Elizabeth.) And the leaders of the heavenly choir chanted, "Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon, to be crowned queen" (cf. Song of Solomon iv. 8). And Mary answered: "Behold I come, for it has been said of me that I shall fulfil Thy will, O my God, and my soul rejoiceth in Thee." In the same moment her soul went out from her body, and flew into her Son's arms, and she was as free from all fleshly pain as she had been strange to everything impure. Afterwards Jesus bade the Apostles bear His mother's body to the valley of Josaphat and bury it in the grave that was prepared for her, and to wait for His return in three days.

"But her soul was surrounded now by red roses that were the troops of martyrs, and by white lilies of the valley that were choirs of angels, confessors, and virgins, and carried by the Son it ascended with them towards Heaven. The Apostles cried after her, 'Whither goest thou, O wisest mother? Remember us, thou our mistress!' The saints, too, who had remained in Heaven, heard the singing of the mounting hosts, and saw with amazement how their King was bearing a woman's soul in His arms, and how she leaned upon Him, and they cried out in astonishment: 'Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?' (cf. Song of Solomon viii. 5). But those who followed her answered, 'She is fair among the daughters of Jerusalem, as ye have seen that she was full of mercy and love.' And thus Mary's soul was carried in joy to

Heaven, where she sits on the throne of honour at her Son's right hand."

Such, according to the *Legenda aurea*, was the course of events at Mary's death. Jacobus de Voragine's account includes the most important of those moments which have been rendered in poetry and art, but many episodes were described with greater detail in other variations of the legend. In sermons and poems, also, the events have often been adorned with effective details which lend a greater realism to the narrative. Thus Metaphrastes, for example, mentions that when Mary received the angel's message, she not only had many candles lit in her home but also had her room cleaned and her bed prepared. Further, we are told, she summoned her neighbours, and all the poor of Jerusalem, whom she used to support with her gifts, to communicate to them her coming departure.[21] In the *Vita rhythmica*, again, it is related that after the angel left her, Mary showed her palm-branch and her shroud to "the women who lived together with her." Then the poet describes how these women wept at losing her "motherly breast" and her kindly conversation.[22] In this as in so many other renderings of the legend, Jesus makes His entry during a heavy rumbling in the sky. The room is filled by sweet scents and the place around Mary is surrounded by a dazzling light. The perfume was so strong, we read in one variation, that all present, except the Apostles and three torch-bearing women, fell into a deep sleep, which prevented them from seeing the heavenly guests.[23] All these details, however, have so little influence on the general character of the narrative, that it is unnecessary to examine them closely.[24] It is more important to notice how the legend gained increased

life and vividness through being represented in pictorial art.

Mary's death could not, of course, be illustrated in early Christian art, since the legend itself was unknown at that time; but from the tenth or eleventh century the motive appears in ivory carvings, manuscript pictures and mosaics, and it has often been represented by the later Mediaeval and earlier Renaissance painters. In Germany this subject, like the birth of Mary, has been very popular, perhaps because it afforded opportunities of portraying one of those house-interiors which have always been so dear to German artists. In this respect also the religious plays have probably had their effect on pictorial art.[25] In their composition the majority of the pictures roughly correspond with one another. Mary lies outstretched on a bed, round which the Apostles are grouped in different positions. Some of them read in great folios, and others swing censers, or sprinkle holy water over the dying woman. The Saviour usually stands at the Madonna's head, and He bears in His arms her soul, which has flown from out her body. The soul again, in accordance with the ancient tradition in art, is represented as a little child, clothed in white linen or in a mantle reaching to the feet.[26] When we see the little figure carried upon the Saviour's arm, we think we recognise the same infant as has been represented so often in the pictures of the Madonna's Presentation in the Temple.

In the attitudes and gestures of the Apostles is expressed, quietly and restrainedly, the grief they feel at losing their own and their Master's mother. Some of them hold their mantles in front of their faces to conceal their tears, others appear lost in pious and sorrowful meditation; but they all remember John's

warning not to show any fear of death. No outburst of lamentation occurs by the bed on which the pure Virgin takes leave of life, and the dying woman herself is the calmest of all. She rests with her hands crossed or closed in prayer, while lights shine on her embellished and carefully-prepared bed. Her face wears the clear and peaceful expression of one who slumbers in a quiet sleep.[27] One is reminded of those mediaeval preachers who zealously asserted that Mary's departure was a "repos," and the Church does not allow mention of her death, for the rubric of the text which is read in memory of her departure is written not *Mors*, but *Dormitio beatae Mariae Virginis*.[28]

The strictly Church point of view could, however, be carried still further than in the compositions described here. When believers had really steeped themselves in the idea of Mary's sinlessness, they would not even admit that any weakness had come upon her before her pure soul left her body. Thus there are pictures in which the Madonna does not lie down, but sits upon her bed; and in the older Holbein's picture at Basle, Mary has not gone to bed at all, but awaits her death in a chair. From such an arrangement it was only a step to represent the Virgin as kneeling in the midst of the Apostles. In this way the last chapter of Mary's history could be brought into complete harmony with the earlier events of her earthly life. Just as she had no need to lie down and rest when her Son was born —so it was probably reasoned—and just as, in spite of her deep sorrow, she *stood* by the Cross when she lost Him, so, too, she was upright when she herself was to depart from the earth. "I will not believe," says Molanus in his great work on the ways of representing holy subjects, "that she was outstretched upon a bed,

like the sick, and those who end this life in pain (*cum venia pictorum et sculptorum*), but I will rather suppose that she, who was not discomforted by any smarts or oppressed by any infirmity, gave up her soul to God with knees reverently bowed and with hands stretched out towards heaven in prayer." [29]

There are not many works of art whose composition would fully answer to Molanus's description, which indeed dates from a time when Church symbolism had lost a good deal of its vitality; but one of these strictly orthodox pictures, that by Martin Schaffner in Munich, belongs both symbolically and aesthetically to the most remarkable of the representations of Mary's departure.[80] The mild grief which, according to custom, had to prevail in the treatment of this motive, has seldom been expressed so beautifully as in the poetical painting of the Ulm master. The censer, the vessel of holy water, and the lighted candelabrum show, indeed, that it is a death-room which is portrayed; but we can see clearly that Death has been powerless against the pure Virgin. She stands upright, although her hands, which had been lifted in prayer, have sunk to her sides. John and James support quite lightly her lifeless body, while over her face there still remains a look of transfigured calm. Her earthly existence has just ceased, it seems, but at the same moment her celestial life has begun. Therefore, in the upper corner of the picture, Schaffner has represented the soul making its entry into Heaven. It is a little girl with long flying locks, who, borne on a cloud and surrounded by angel "putti," stretches out her arms towards the Saviour, who waits to receive her into His home. A second Presentation in the Temple this picture might well be called. The attitude and gesture are here the same as those

of the Mary who with such glad courage ascends the lofty steps to the Tabernacle at Jerusalem. The childishness and the naïve grace by which Anne's daughter "won all the people's love," are retained unaltered in the old woman's soul. A Catholic dogmatist would probably see in the German picture a proof that one who lives a long life without being defiled is inwardly as young in her old age as in her childhood.

Martin Schaffner's composition, as we see, departs from the legend in making Mary's soul be received by the Saviour only when up in the clouds. Some Italian painters, on the other hand, following the apocryphal writings, let the little child float up skyward in the Divinity's arms.[31] It was, however, only in exceptional cases that the Ascension of the Soul was represented at all. Catholic art and poetry have usually preferred to render the so-called Assumption (*i.e.* the taking up of Mary's *body*), which is the subject of the later chapter in the story of the Madonna's departure.

The Virgin was unlike all created beings in that even her body was perfectly pure. It was this body which had enclosed God, and therefore it could not be allowed to remain on the earth. To the faithful it was in itself holy, even after the soul had abandoned it. Therefore the outer, purely material part of Mary's being had its own history, which symbolically and aesthetically is the most notable portion of the Madonna-legend. This miraculous history, which closes with the Ascension of the Body, takes place immediately after the "Dormitio," *i.e.* after the moment when the Virgin fell asleep in a painless death.

When Jacobus de Voragine has mentioned how

Mary's soul was transported to Heaven, he returns in his narrative to the room of death. We learn that the three virgins who were present began to disrobe the holy body in order to wash it; but as long as the work lasted, the corpse shone with so strong a light that it could not be distinguished even by those who were touching it.—It should not be forgotten that already Johannes Damascenus had affirmed that at this washing it was the water which was cleaned by the corpse.[82]—Afterwards the Apostles reverently and carefully lifted the dead woman and laid her on a bier. When Mary was about to be carried to her grave, a noble strife arose amongst the foremost disciples as to their precedence in the procession. John wished Peter, whom God had chosen as shepherd of His sheep, to walk before the bier with the angel's palm-branch in his hand; but Peter thought that this place was due to John, who had become Jesus' disciple while His body was still virginal. "It is most proper," he said, "that a virgin should bear the Virgin's palm"; and it was Peter's will that prevailed. Peter and Paul bore the dead woman with the help of the servants, while the other Apostles walked beside the bier, and sent up the chant which had been sung when Israel went out of Egypt. "And the Lord surrounded with a cloud both the bier and the Apostles, so that their voices were heard, but they could not be seen. And the angels joined with the Apostles and themselves sang also, so that the air was filled with marvellous sounds."

During the procession to the grave Mary's presentiment that the Jews would attempt to capture her corpse were confirmed. The people in Jerusalem, who heard the celestial song and saw the cloud round the Apostles, understood that it was the tabernacle of the Lord which

was passing. They incited each other to kill the disciples and burn the body which had borne "the impostor." The High Priest raged most furiously of all, and he rushed towards the bier to overthrow it, but his hands were paralysed and stuck to the bier, while the angels that were hidden in the cloud struck the other Jews with blindness. Only when the priest was converted to a belief in the Saviour and His mother were his hands released, and he regained the use of his arms when he kissed Mary's bier. Those of the Jews who were willing to believe were cured of their blindness after their eyes had been touched by the heavenly palm-branch. The Apostles continued their procession, and laid the Virgin in the grave prepared for her. According to the Saviour's command, they stayed there three days to wait for His return.

It is not difficult to understand how the legend of the miracle of Mary's burial arose. The Virgin's body had been compared, in its character of a sacred shrine, to the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant. It was an easy step, therefore, to let that body be surrounded by a cloud when it was carried at the head of the procession of the faithful. Neither was much imagination required to think out the episode of the High Priest who was paralysed when he touched the Virgin's coffin. For the miracle is the same as that told of Uzzah, who ventured to touch the Ark of the Covenant when it was being carried into the city of David (2 Samuel vi.)—with the difference only that Uzzah was "smitten" for his audacity, while the High Priest only lost the use of his arms. This milder form of punishment recalls the story of Salome, the unbelieving midwife in the Protoevangile.

If we start from Peter's saying that John, as an

undefiled youth, was most worthy of bearing the Virgin's palm, we may find our way to another source of the legend. For this saying is not the only example of the pure disciple being put forward as a male counterpart to the Virgin.

It was he who, next to Mary, had stood closest to God, and followed Him most faithfully during His Passion. It was also thought that there was an indication in the Scriptures of John's love for the Saviour having been rewarded. In the Fourth Gospel it is said (xxi. 23), "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." These words were not confirmed by the canonical books; but in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, which were widely disseminated during the first centuries, there was a Gnostic legend concerning John, according to which he, like Enoch and Elijah, was taken up to Heaven, both body and soul.

If this could be told of him who had lain on the Saviour's breast and preserved his chastity for His sake, it must be supposed that a similar privilege would be granted, with still greater reason, to her who bore the Saviour in her body and who was by nature pure from the very commencement of her life. Such a line of thought, as Lucius pointed out, is responsible for certain features in the story of Mary's departure being taken from the legend of John.[33] Just as the legend of Mary's birth was influenced by the account in the Gospel narratives of John the Baptist's aged parents, so the legend of Mary's death was shaped under the influence of the legends about the Apostle John. The correspondence between the two miracle-histories is indeed striking. John, like Mary, receives an annunciation of his departure, for the Saviour Himself, we are told,

appeared to him and told him that on the next Sunday he would be united to his Master. John, like Mary, summoned all his disciples and forewarned them that he would shortly leave them. Then he went with them outside the city of Ephesus and chose a place where he had a grave dug. At the grave he prayed for the last time to God, praised the Saviour as a Redeemer of souls and a conqueror of demons, and thanked Him for the grace which had befallen him in that he had succeeded in living a pure and virginal life. When he finished his prayer, his figure—like Mary's body—was encircled by so brilliant a light that no one could endure to look at it. Then he lay down in the grave and gave up his spirit. But when the disciples betook themselves next morning to the open grave they did not find John's body, but only his sandals, which clearly proved that the Apostle had been miraculously taken up to Heaven.

So scanty an account, however, was not sufficient in the legend of Mary. The Saviour Himself, it is said in the continuation of the Golden Legend, went down to earth a second time to fetch the tabernacle in which He had rested. He came accompanied by hosts of angels, and He saluted the waiting disciples. And He asked them what honour they thought He should show to His mother. They answered: "It seems right to Thy servants, O Lord, that even as Thou, after Thy conquest over Death, reignest through the ages, Thou shouldest now awake Thy mother's body and give her for ever a place at Thy side." In the same moment the angel Michael brought Mary's soul from Heaven. And Jesus said: "Arise, Mother, my dove, thou tabernacle of glory, thou vessel of life, thou heavenly temple, that thy body, which has never been polluted by fleshly sin, may not

suffer in the grave the decay of the flesh." Then her soul returned with Mary's body, which arose shining from the grave, and with the hosts of angels ascended through space.

This, however, is only a relatively meagre and matter-of-fact account of the miracle. In sermons and books of devotion the event has been the subject of far more extensive expositions.[84] In these descriptions the apparition of the Saviour is accompanied by shining clouds and heavenly sounds and sweet scents, and Mary's entry into Heaven is described as a splendid triumph. If, it was said, God ordained that the Ark of the Covenant should be borne in pomp into the city of David, He must certainly have taken care that His own mother, the human ark, was carried into the Heavenly Jerusalem with far greater pageantry. Elijah was taken up from earth in a fiery chariot, but Mary was taken up to Heaven by hosts of angels, and her approach awoke wonder and admiration among the inhabitants of Heaven. Just as at her soul's ascension the people of God had sung, in the words of the Song of Solomon, of her who went up from the desert, so now they could with still better reason apply the terms of the old poem to the Mother of God.[85] For Mary's body was the vessel, in which the Holy Ghost made the incense, which the High Priest Christ offered upon the altar of the Cross to His Father. By carrying this incense within her, the Virgin had herself become sweet and fragrant in her beauty.[86] Therefore she arose from the grave like "a pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant" (Song of Solomon iii. 6). Sung of and glorified in the same similes that were used in praise of the Jewish bride, Mary was borne as a queen up through the circles of Heaven unto her

Son's kingly throne.[37] The nine angel-choirs welcomed her with chants of praise, the thrones and principalities glorified her, the saints came to meet her worshipping her, the Trinity was rejoiced to receive her,[38] and the Son opened to her a new home in return for that which she had offered to Him at the Incarnation.[39]

The legend of the Assumption, as has already been mentioned, gives rise to numerous pictures. Most artists have elected to treat the moment when the holy body ascends into the air, or that when Mary is received by the heavenly hosts; but the events enacted on the earth below have also, though less frequently, been illustrated in painting and sculpture. Thus the attack of the Jews on the funeral procession has been portrayed, and in doing so artists have not omitted to show two hands hanging loose by the bier.[40] The burial, which in Greek art was made the subject of many compositions, has seldom been noticed by the Western painters, though Taddeo di Bartolo devoted one of his frescoes at Siena to the moment when the Saviour leans down from Heaven to lift up His mother's reanimated body from the grave. On the other hand, the grave itself, with the Apostles surrounding it, has often been represented in pictures of the Assumption. The Apostles gaze down at the empty tomb — from which, in accordance with a free interpretation of the old legend, roses and lilies spring up—or up at Mary as she disappears. Wonder and reverence at the miracle are revealed in their attitudes. As Raphael portrayed the holy men in his picture at the Vatican, devotion is the predominant feeling among them. It looks as if they tried to listen to the heavenly music with which the angels in the upper compartment of the picture accompany the

Virgin's Coronation. In Titian's famous "Assumptio" at Venice, on the other hand, it is not a mild religious feeling, but a dramatic, not to say theatrical astonishment, which is expressed by the Apostles' outstretched hands and violent bodily attitudes.

Into the circle of the Apostles artists have often introduced a disciple who, according to the legend, was not present at the actual resurrection. S. Thomas, we are told, only arrived after the miracle had taken place. With his well-known lack of faith he hesitates on this occasion also to allow himself to be persuaded by the other disciples' account of the miracle; but the Madonna, who wished to appease his doubt and perhaps also mildly to reproach him for his scepticism, gave him a tangible and indubitable proof of her Ascension, for she dropped from the clouds her own girdle into Thomas's hands. This girdle was preserved in Jerusalem after the Apostle's death, and during the Crusades was stolen by a girl who fled with her Italian lover to Prato. It is not part of our subject to tell the tale how the pure Virgin's girdle during many adventures helped the two lovers to a happy end of their escapade, but the result of the story is worthy of note. Out of gratitude the runaway Crusader deposited his precious relic in the church of his mother-city, where it is kept in a special chapel decorated with representations of the legend of "la sacra cintola."[41] The transference of the girdle to Prato caused the Madonna's gift to Thomas to become a subject dear to Italian art. The motive has usually been united with the motive of the Assumption—that is to say, Mary has been made to drop her girdle to Thomas during her Ascension; but it is also probable that many compositions which pass under the name of Assumption pictures do not represent the actual Assump-

tion, but that later moment when from her new home the Madonna sends testimony of her resurrection to the doubter. Artists have usually treated the legend with so great a freedom that it is often difficult to determine which particular situation they meant to illustrate.[42]

This indefiniteness appears also in the portrayal of the chief figure in the compositions. Jacopo Avanzi makes the Saviour carry His mother's body in His arms, in the same way that in pictures of the Madonna's death He lifts the soul-child up to Heaven.[43] In a picture in the Martin collection at London, ascribed to Giotto, it is the ascension of the soul, and not of the body, which is represented in connection with the burial.[44] Ottaviano Nelli's fresco at Foligno, on the other hand, leaves no room for misapprehension, for it is here a full-grown woman, with aged face, who floats up enclosed in the Saviour's arms.

It is, however, only in exceptional cases that the Mother and Son make their entry into Heaven together. In the majority of the pictures of the Assumption the Madonna's figure is alone. She sits on a throne, surrounded by an almond-shaped glory, the so-called "mandorla," which is borne by angels, or she floats in an erect position towards the clouds. The latter disposition is distinctive of High Renaissance art; the former was employed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Angels circle around the Virgin singing and playing, and angels receive her with music into the highest Heaven. In this manner it was attempted to render in pictures the gorgeous descriptions of the Madonna's Assumption given in the legends. Nevertheless, art did not employ all its resources in representing the actual journey to Heaven. The greatest effects were reserved for the situation which forms the

culmination of the Madonna's history, and the supreme glorification of humanity.

When Mary was received by the Trinity, that promise was fulfilled which the Son had given her when, in the words of the Song of Solomon, He called her soul to Himself: "Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni, *coronaberis*" (iv. 8). She was conducted, we are told, by the foremost princes of Heaven to the throne of the Trinity, where she knelt humbly before God. The angels brought her a royal robe, and the seraphs procured the crown of the Eternal Kingdom and handed it to the Trinity. The Father and the Son laid the crown upon the Virgin's head and consecrated her as Queen of Heaven and Earth. The new-crowned queen was then set upon a divine throne amidst the joy and wonder of all the hosts of Heaven.

It is in its representations of the *Coronation of the Virgin* that art made its most important contribution to the cult of the Madonna. All that could be achieved in colouring and gilding, in costly apparel and effective grouping of masses, has been combined to give splendour to the great apotheosis, when Mary is worshipped as the enthroned Queen of Heaven. Jacopo Torriti's mosaic of the thirteenth century, Fra Angelico's painting in the Uffizi, and Filippo Lippi's fresco at Spoleto, are the best-known examples of this kind of ceremonial pictures. The Madonna sits at her Son's side, or kneels before His throne, while He presses the crown upon her head, and angels in full orchestra send up music to the Virgin's praise. Long golden bassoons, harps, organs, violins, flutes and cithers accompany the heavenly choirs. When further, as is the case in Fra Angelico's painting, the divine figures are outlined against a background of shining gold, which gleams over the picture like the

Northern lights, and throws its strong glare on all the holy faces, the splendour has reached a culmination which no work of Church art is able to surpass.

This external luxuriance decreases gradually during the late Renaissance. In the pictures of the Virgin's Coronation, as in the representations of all the other religious motives, it can be seen how the new ideals of style have lead to a simplification of the composition. The gorgeous instruments disappear, the dresses become less showy, and the figures fewer. At the same time it becomes a more and more common custom to let the Virgin be crowned, not by the Son alone, but by the Father and the Son together.[45] These divine figures dominate the pictures, from which all superfluous personages and accessories have been removed. Symmetry and proportion replace the former richness of detail. If, however, the works of art thus become poor in colour and brilliancy, there is no doubt that to the faithful they are still pregnant with significance. Mary's Ascension and Coronation must indeed make a deep and powerful impression on all pious minds. As at the Incarnation, Earth and Heaven had united, but this time it was Earth which had ascended to Heaven. In Mary's body, which was rescued from the dissolution of death, the whole created and visible world was glorified. All that was purely human and earthly partook of her honour. Therefore it is aptly written in Bonaventura's *Psaltare*: "Ave praeclara omnibus—Angelicis virtutibus—Cujus fuit Assumptio—Nostra glorificatio."[46]

CHAPTER XXI

THE SYMBOLS OF THE VIRGIN

Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern,
Maria, lieblich ausgedrückt,
Doch keins von allen kann dich schildern,
Wie meine Seele dich erblickt.
. . . . . .

NOVALIS, *Geistliche Lieder.*

BY following Mary's life from her birth to her Assumption we can gradually form a certain idea of her being, but that idea remains incomplete so long as we know only the narrative forms of art and literature. However much has been written about the *history* of the Madonna, yet this constitutes only the lesser half of piety's offering to the Mother of God. It is in the glorification of her *person* that Mary's worshippers have brought forth their richest tribute. By poetical epithets and ingeniously selected symbols, they have sought to embellish that ideal form so as to make it include in itself all conceivable beauty. The idea of the Madonna has hereby been enriched with many qualities which cannot be visualised in external, tangible works of art, and which cannot, moreover, appear in all their wealthy accumulation in the historical accounts of Mary's life. What has been said concerning the Virgin in the foregoing chapters, must therefore be supplemented by a general view of the purely lyrical Madonna-poetry and the rhetorical panegyrics.

To avoid repetitions it is best to arrange the similes and emblems of religious literature in small groups, each of which answers to some special stage in the relationship of Mary to the Divinity. In making such a division it is most natural to begin with those expressions of glorification which refer to the Virgin's youth, *i.e.* to those qualities in the Madonna by reason of which she was singled out among all as an instrument for the Incarnation.

Purity was, as has already been pointed out, the dominant characteristic of her who was to be a covering for the Highest, but the child Mary was not only physically and spiritually spotless, she was also in all other respects a model for young virgins. She was warm in her sympathetic affection, humble, obedient, and submissive, and modest even to timidity. All these inner qualities were reflected in her outer being and lent her that grace by which she involuntarily charmed all who saw her. She was beautiful, for only the fairest could be God's bride and mother; but more important than her beauty was the fact that she possessed the unconscious grace of mild humility. Accordingly her modesty and transparent innocence, together with her absolute purity, are the qualities which have most often been expressed in the symbols of the youthful Mary.

To indicate how spotless the Virgin was, she was compared with the purest things known. She is the snow which is whiter than snow, "nix nive candidior";[1] she is the innocent dove which has no gall;[2] and she is the mirror, "specula sine macula," which on its clear surface can reflect the Divinity.[3] The precious stones that shine with a pure light denote at once her beauty and her virginity. It has even been attempted to form

an analogy between each of her virtues and some special jewel, and symbolical crowns and diadems have thus been fashioned for the Madonna. In these "petrified litanies" the chalcedon shines with a fire corresponding to the love in Mary's heart, the emerald is pure as she, the sardonyx has the same clear light as her meekness, the beryl awakes thoughts of her humility, and the agate recalls her modesty.[4] Thus the virtues with which as a child she won the hearts of all have their place in the radiant ornament round the brow of Heaven's Queen. This is only natural and right, for Mary at her highest exaltation still preserved all the modest grace of childhood. Nevertheless, it is not in precious stones that symbols of the youthful Virgin's nature were primarily sought for. The diamonds and jewels belong to the queen; the girl, on the contrary, who grew up in humble circumstances, is best denoted by things less costly. Mary's beauty did not thrust itself upon the spectator, but concealed itself shyly. Therefore she is best likened to the flowers of the field, whose glory of colour is natural, simple, and often inconspicuous.

It is well known that the Madonna has in many cases lent her name to herbs and flowers. "Mary's bedstraw," "Mary's mantle," "Mary's mat," "hands," "gloves," "sandals," and many similar plant-names are found in all modern languages. "Les yeux de Marie" is one of the many designations of that "Blümlein wunderschön" that we call forget-me-not.[5] It is not only popular imagination that has thus connected the idea of the Virgin with herbs, which give an impression of loveliness and purity. The religious poets also, and even the dogmatic writers, have sought in the world of flowers for symbols of the Madonna's virtues. The

beauty of the colours and the scents from earth's gardens preserved for the pious the memory of the Virgin's sweetness.[6] She is the flower of flowers, because she is fairer than any that adorn the ground. Therefore, also, the queen of flowers, the rose, is her natural symbol. It represents Mary as Dante saw her in the Highest Heaven (*Paradiso* xxiii. 73), but its rich colour also corresponds to the love she bore in her heart during her life on earth.[7] Her steadfast piety, which did not fail even under the severest trials, made her a rose among thorns, a "rosa inter spinas."[8] The wild rose had further, it was said, five petals, just as Maria experienced five great joys, and just as there are five letters in her dear name.[9]

By itself, however, the red rose was insufficient as a symbol of the Madonna, partly because it corresponded only to one side of her nature, partly because it was also used as a likeness of the Saviour and the martyrs.[10] Therefore when the theologians wished to characterise the Virgin by means of a single image, they compared her to a rose at once red and white.[11] In such a flower both her love and her virginity were symbolised. This fantastic plant, however, has never achieved any common use in poetry. The simile has been completed instead by the addition of another symbol which, unlike the red flower of love, expressed the Madonna's perfect purity. Mary was not only the rose, but she was at the same time the lily, which is white, untouched and noble in its high virginity.[12] The lily, according to old belief, had the power of healing, and it therefore corresponded to her who was to give the world a cure for its sins.[13] The lily also had a strong perfume,[14] and according to the theologians, perfume is related to a flower's glory of colour in the same way as are a woman's inner virtues

to her outer beauty. Further, the lily was a symbol of fertility as well as of chastity, for which reason, as has already been pointed out, it had its given place in pictures of the Annunciation. The stately lily, which is Gabriel's attribute in these compositions, can, however, hardly be the same plant that is described in the Bible poems. It is more probable that the "lily of the valley," the "lily of Sharon," and the "lily among the thorns" was a white anemone.[15] Such a flower, even better than the glorious symbol of the Incarnation, would give expression to that modesty which is always emphasised in the youthful Mary.

In this modesty of hers the Virgin was likened to all the small herbs that hide their crests in the grass. Mignonette was, according to the pious, one of Mary's favourite flowers.[16] In Ambrosius's symbolism of plants the iris signified her solitude, but the daisy her modesty,[17] and in an old French sermon the Madonna's humility is compared with nard: "for nard is a little low plant of warm nature, out of which costly ointments are prepared, and hereby is understood Mary's submissiveness, her love, and her piety. These three things, that were marvellously united, gave a strong scent that smelt pleasant to God."[18] The type of all these unpretending flowers, however, is that harbinger of spring, the violet, which has so often been celebrated in mediaeval poetry. Thus we read in S. Bernard: "Maria est viola humilitatis, lilium castitatis, rosa caritatis, gloria et decus coeli"—"Mary is the violet of humility, the lily of chastity, the rose of charity, and the glory and splendour of the Heavens."[19] The violet does not push itself forward to court attention, but its scent betrays its charms; and it was the scent of Mary's humility which drew the Highest to unite Himself with her.

The idea of the odour of the flower arousing God's pleasure leads us to a new group of Madonna-symbols, *i.e.* to those likenesses and similes which refer to the Saviour's incarnation in the Virgin's body. As has already been mentioned, men saw in this mystery a kind of erotic relationship between the Creator and the foremost of created beings. Christ wedded the Virgin just as, according to theologians, He wedded her symbolical counterpart, the Holy Church. Each of these ideas was based on a theological interpretation of that cycle of ancient love and marriage chants which is wrongly named "The Song of Solomon." The heroine in the Jewish marriage songs was, it was said, not only a personification of the community of believers, but also a prefiguring type of the future Mother of God. All the expressions of erotic ecstasy with which the lover in the Song of Solomon celebrated the beauty of his beloved could, therefore, be applied to the Virgin. Indeed, we find that as early as the first centuries the Church Fathers in their panegyrics of the Madonna employed the imagery of Solomon's Song;[20] and during the Middle Ages proper it was the influence of the Biblical love-songs which, more than anything else, gave its character to the Mary-poetry.[21] Chivalry and the Cult of Love had led men to invoke the heavenly woman with something of the same worship they accorded to the lady of their heart. Therefore from all the symbols of the Madonna they selected by preference those in which Mary was characterised, not as an ascetic virgin or a sublime Mother of God, but as a young bride.

In the hymns of the Church and of secular bards, the Old Testament model was so faithfully followed that the heavenly bride was even allowed to borrow some of

the epithets that were quite individually distinctive of "Solomon's" beloved. The youthful Shulamite had felt humiliated when she saw the pale faces of the town girls and compared it with her own dark complexion. Therefore she sings (i. 5): "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." This half-apologetic characteristic, "Nigra sum, sed formosa," is perpetually met with in the literature of the Madonna. It has probably even contributed in its degree to the custom of representing the Virgin as a black-haired and dark-complexioned woman. Since the oldest pictures of Mary had in many cases been darkened by age and layers of smoke, it is just these "black Madonnas" which have, with reference to the Song of Solomon, been taken as faithful portraits of the Mother of God. Some authors have even ventured to find a reason for the dark colour, so often insisted upon in poems and pictures. During her residence in Egypt, they say, the Virgin had been burnt by the sun in the same way as the Shulamite, when she guarded her brother's vineyards out in the fields.[22]

When so personal a characteristic, as her dark complexion, was transferred from the Old Testament bride to the Virgin Mary, it is only natural that the Madonna shared in all the glorifying epithets with which the Song of Solomon literally overflows. Of the Virgin, therefore, as of her prototype, it is sung that she was "a flower in Sharon and a lily in the valley," and a "rose among the thorns." She became a pigeon of the rocks, whose face peeped out from among the mountain clefts. Her walk over the mountains to her kinswoman Elizabeth was described, as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,

in the same words that are used in the Song of Solomon to describe the lover's hastening to his beloved: "Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart" (ii. 8-9). When the Son-Bridegroom called Mary's soul to Himself, He drew her with the words from the ancient morning song, the inspiration of which is echoed in numberless modern aubades, from Ronsard's "Marie, levez-vous," to the Swedish "Upp Amaryllis"—"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (ii. 10-14). When Mary's body ascended to Heaven she was welcomed by angels with those verses in which the old folk-bards sang of the approach of the bride, when she was brought to her bridegroom in solemn procession, surrounded by warriors like Solomon on his chariot, and preceded by men carrying smoking pans on high stangs.[28] "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense? (iii. 6). And when the angels saw her enclosed in her Son's arms, they repeated the words in the last chant of the Song of Solomon: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?" (viii. 5). Mary was the "bride from Lebanon," who was called up from the earth to be crowned in Heaven (iv. 8). She was "all fair," and there was "no spot" in her (iv. 7):

"Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te." To her could be applied, better than to any other created being, the daring metaphors used by the lover in the Song of Solomon to describe his beloved's mighty and compelling beauty (vi. 10): "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"—"Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?"

The majority of the similes in the Song of Solomon are so indefinite in character that they could not be used to express anything except the Virgin's insurpassable charm, but there are certain of these similes into which a deeper reference to Mary's qualities could be read. Thus, "terrible as an army with banners" not only signified that Mary was invincible in her loveliness, but the comparison aroused also thoughts of that eternal war existing between "the woman" and "the serpent"; and this poetical phrase has undoubtedly had its share in making the Virgin a "Madonna of the Victories." "The morning," again, was an image which symbolised Mary's relationship to the Divinity; for if Christ, in accordance with His time-honoured title, was "the world's true sun and day," His mother was the morning twilight that announced the sun's rising. "Mary," says Birgitta, "may rightly be called the break of day, which the true sun Jesus Christ lighted," because "she called and led forth the Son's sun." [24]

A still closer association with the dogmatic view of the Madonna could be brought about by means of the attributes which occur in the fourth chapter of the Song of Solomon. In this portion of his song-cycle,

the poet praises the beauty of his beloved in a succession of bold similes, which are to our taste rather far-fetched, but which to Orientals undoubtedly appear poetical and apposite. First he glorifies her eyes—"thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks"—and her hair, which is "as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead." Then he sings of her white and flawless teeth, which "are like a flock of sheep . . . which come up from the washing"; of her red lips and blushing cheeks. Then he turns his gaze to her neck, which rises high and straight from her body, and which is probably in oriental fashion adorned with great hanging metal ornaments, and when he sees how these ornaments outline themselves against the dark skin, he finds a comparison as apposite as it is effective: "Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men." The same simile is introduced anew in another part of the song-cycle (vii. 1-9), which was probably sung at a country wedding while the bride danced before the guests. During the dance the singer—so the commentators tell us—points out her beauty to the spectators. He advises the bride to turn round, so that they may see her from different sides; he praises the beauty of her feet with shoes, her loins, her body, and finally her face: "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus."

The tower which is thus quoted time after time in glorifying the Shulamite's beauty has received no less prominent a place in the poetry of the Madonna.[25] Not only is it employed in the poets' songs to Mary, but

it has even won a place in the official Church services. In the so-called Lauretan litany we find in the summary of the Virgin's epithets those well-known attributes *Turris Davidica* and *Turris eburnea*. Here, however, the similes do not serve to arouse any idea of external beauty; they do not recall the lofty rising of Mary's neck, but her religious rank and her moral deserts. "Turris Davidica" is translated in French Psalm-books by "Gloire de la maison de David," and "Turris eburnea" is rendered quite freely by "Modèle de pureté."[26] It is easily understood that the tower, which is the highest part of a building, should be compared with Mary, in whose person the house of David culminated—all the more so, because the idea of a house can in this case be interpreted not only in an architectural, but also in a genealogical meaning. However, it is only one side of the symbolism which appears in Mary's "gloire," *i.e.* in her splendour. The Virgin is a "turris" also, because the tower is more inaccessible than any other kind of building. Just as in Mass-symbolism the tower was an image of impregnable power, so in Madonna-symbolism it was an image of inviolable purity. Thus chastity was allegorically represented under the image of a woman enclosed in a tower.[27] Further, when—probably with reference to some definite building in ancient Jerusalem—the tower was said to be built of ivory, its inaccessible purity is still more emphasised. The thought of a pre-eminent and spotless isolation has its classical expression in the litany's "Tour d'ivoire," which words, as is well known, have served as a motto not only in religious, but also in romantic and aesthetic literature. Again, the tower is also something besides a "model of purity." It can be used as a "pars pro toto" to

signify a whole fortress. In this sense, Mary, like the eucharistic tabernacle, is "a tower of David made with bastions," in which the faithful can take refuge from the attacks of the devil; and from the sides of the tower the worshippers of the Madonna can, in accordance with the simile of the Song of Solomon, seize "bucklers and all kinds of weapons of strong men" as a defence against Hell.[28] Thus even the ornaments on the Jewish bride's neck have gained an importance in theological symbolism.

In the wedding chants of oriental peoples, however, it is not only the beauty of the bride that is sung. She is also glorified as the untouched maiden, whose love no one has yet enjoyed, and whose virginity is preserved for her husband. The bridegroom in the Song of Solomon also praises his Shulamite in this respect with some poetical metaphors, the erotic, not to say phallic, implication of which it is easy to grasp; and the bride on her side invites him, using the same similes, to take possession of the treasures reserved for him alone. He likens her physical virginity to closed and well-protected things: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse," he sings; "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (iv. 12). Her being is to him like a grove of "pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard; spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices" (iv. 13). "She is a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon," but he is for the bride a wind that streams in to the closed pleasure-garden (iv. 16): "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

This erotic antiphon has, of course, like all the other parts of the ancient poem, been interpreted by theologians in an allegorical and moral sense. The frank similes of the bride's chastity, which was to be guarded for her husband, have been transformed into symbols of the chastity of ascetic virgins, which was never to be broken; and it cannot be gainsaid that, taken by themselves, the metaphors of the Song of Solomon are well fitted for such an application. It is perfectly apposite when Ambrosius, in his treatise on the education of virgins, reminds his female readers of the sealed spring: "Let no one trouble its waters, and no one disturb them, so that thou mayest see thine own picture clearly mirrored in the well."[29] And the moral interpretation is well carried out in Ambrosius's comment on the verse: "Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus." "Only in gardens," he says, "upon which, by such a sealing, God's image has been impressed, can the well-spring of the heart shine forth in pure waves."—"There virtue is fenced round with the lofty hedge of spiritual walls, and hides itself from all robbers. Even as a garden enclosed against thieves is green with vines, smells of olives and shines with roses, so in the garden of holy virginity there grow, smell, and shine the vines of piety, the olives of peace and the red roses of chastity."[30]

All that could be said about pious virgins generally was applicable in a higher degree to her who was the model for all virgins, and in this respect also the similes of the Song of Solomon were peculiarly applicable to Mary. She was, says Hesychius, the fountain of "the river of life which has filled all the earth."[31] Water is a symbol of grace, and Mary was "full of

grace." The garden, again, was an image of her being, in which the virtues of love, chastity, and humility shone and smelt like flowers in a field, and the perfumes from this garden were spread over all the world when the south wind blew over it and ripened the fruits of the vine.[32] But "the vine" is He who feeds His community with His own blood under the form of the vine. Therefore the love-song of the Song of Solomon was a prophecy of the Divine Incarnation in the Virgin's womb.

As applied to this miracle, however, the similes of the sealed fountain and the enclosed garden obtained a purely literal meaning. In their boldly gynaecological speculations concerning Mary's threefold virginity the dogmatists could refer advantageously to the Song of Solomon. If Ambrosius transferred the symbolism to a spiritual sphere in his treatises on virginity, yet that symbolism was understood by others of the Church Fathers in as physical (although ascetically anti-erotic) a sense as in the ancient wedding-chants. The fountain and the garden became images of Mary's virgin womb, which was closed both before, during, and after the miraculous birth.[33] All that was told of the riches of the pleasure-garden in the Song of Solomon was, it was said, matched by the pure and holy bosom of the Madonna. The allegorical poets of the Middle Ages strove to work out this analogy even in the smallest details, and, in doing so, probably carried their ingenuity further than strict theology would approve of;[34] but even the leading dogmatists expressed themselves in this respect with an unreserve which to the taste of our time appears much too naturalistic. "Hortus deliciarum," says S. Bernard, "nobis est sacratissimus tuus uterus, O Maria; quia ex eo multiplices gaudii flores colligimus, quoties mente

recolimus, quam magna multitudo dulcedinis toti orbi inde affulsit"—"A pleasure-garden for us is thy most holy womb, O Mary, from which we can pluck manifold flowers of joy every time we think of what wealth of sweetness has thence streamed forth over the world." [35]

As tokens of her absolute virginity the garden and the well have been two of the most popular of all the images of Mary, but men have not been content with these similes in visualising the miraculous element in her motherhood. Mary is not only a "hortus inclusus" and a "fons signatus," but she is also a "porta clausa." It has already been mentioned that, ever since the time of Ambrosius, people had seen in Ezekiel's closed gate, which no one save Israel's God could pass through and which would remain closed after He had passed, a prophecy of the Madonna's body, which retained its "closed" virginity both during and after the Divinity's birth.[36] "Porta clausa" thus has the same symbolic meaning as "the sealed fountain" and "the enclosed garden." Like these attributes, however, the images were used in a derived sense to indicate the whole of Mary's being.

On the basis of a similar widening of ideas, Mary has also been characterised as a "Vellus Gedeonis." Gideon's fleece, which, as already mentioned, prefigured the miraculous Incarnation, has won its place in the list of the Virgin's attributes, and as this fleece was moistened by the dew of Heaven, the dew also was regarded as an emblem of Mary. Another Old Testament legend which afforded matter for Mary-poetry is that of Aaron's blossoming staff (Numbers xvii. 5). The miracle by which Moses' brother was selected as High Priest had indeed been the model for the token, by reason of which Joseph became Mary's husband; and the staff, which blossomed through a miracle, corre-

sponded to her who was fertilised through a miracle. Mary is therefore Aaron's blossoming staff, and she is "a branch out of the root of Jesse," which, according to Isaiah's prophecy (xi. 1), was to give forth fruit to Israel.[87] Further, she is not only a green and blossoming bough, she is also a bush. For since, without losing her virginity, she conceived and bore a child in her womb, she was like that bush in the Old Testament which burned without being consumed. God had descended to her and made her a guiding sign during the wandering in the desert.[88] Therefore the "rubus ardens non combustus," the burning bush, is an attribute of the Madonna which has often been portrayed in art,[89] and which poetry too has not omitted to mention.

There are, as it appears, a variegated quantity of symbols of the Divine Incarnation, but this multitude is nevertheless far surpassed by the number of similes which refer to that period of the Virgin's life when God had His abode in her body. It was, indeed, a natural consequence of the dogmatic point of view that Mary should be glorified before all as the bearer of the Highest. It was in this character that she first became an object of veneration to the faithful. Ambrosius has said emphatically that she was not herself "a God in the temple," but "a temple for God."[40] All that perfect purity and holiness which distinguished her even from her conception in Anna's womb, was only a preparation for that supernatural beauty with which she shone when she carried the Divinity in her body. His presence radiated from her being and made her a heavenly vessel. Therefore the Madonna was glorified as the most perfect of all sacred shrines.

In this praising of Mary's motherhood the same concrete and naturalistic terminology was used as in the lauding of her perfect virginity. In imagination, it must be supposed, poets and preachers saw her entire person before them, with all its spiritual and physical characteristics; but the similes they chose to express their homage referred only to the physical shrine, and the idea was taken in its most limited connotation. Just as the emblems of chastity referred to the miracle of Mary's womb remaining closed at the Incarnation and Birth, so the symbols of her motherhood referred to another miraculous quality of the Virgin: her body was not only a room which, without opening, could let God go out and in, it was also a "receptaculum capacissimum" which enclosed the greatest of all conceivable contents. For the child that was conceived in Mary's womb was the very God of whom it was said (1 Kings viii. 27) that "the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee."

The contrast between the Virgin's body and the infinite greatness of God was just such an one as could be used advantageously by theological orators in their casuistical rhetoric. When the doctrine of Mary as the Mother of God had to be defended against the Nestorian heresy, it was asserted in a defiant paradox that "He, who could not be embraced by the Heavens, did not find Mary's womb too narrow." Proclus, Theodetus, Methodius, Zeno of Verona, and Augustine expressed in similar formulae the same effective antithesis.[41] From sermons and dogmatic treatises the literary motive spread to religious hymns. Ephraim Syrus clothed it in stately guise when in one of his Songs of Mary he cried out: "Heaven and Earth were too narrow to enclose, as with two wings, their God.

But Mary's womb was wider than Heaven and Earth, and greater than the world."[42] The sequence of Bernardus Morlanensis gave, in quick and lively rhythm, to the doctrine of the great mystery the additional point of a play upon words :—

O felicem
Genitricem
Cujus sacra viscera
Meruere
Continere
Continentem omnia.[43]

In Latin poetry the idea of the Virgin's womb having enclosed Him, "quem totus orbis non capit," became a commonplace which was unceasingly repeated by the poets of the Madonna, without however gaining any new character by the small variations in expression ;[44] but the dogmatic paradox won a poetical and naïve formulation when it was paraphrased in modern languages. Not much of Ephraim's ponderousness remains in Lionardo Giustiniani's canzone :—

. . . .
o vaso picciolino, in cui si posa
Colui, che il Ciel non piglia,[45]
. . . .

and in Heinrich von Loufenberg's song the antithesis has entirely lost its imposing import :—

Quem totus orbis nit begreif,
Hat sich in deines ventris reif
Gar zartlich occultieret.[46]

It was, as has been said, from a passage in the Book of Kings that the expression as to the heavens being too narrow for God's greatness was drawn. By these words, it was said, Solomon had expressed at the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem the vainness of building a dwelling-place for the Highest.[47] By a similar

reasoning the author of the Acts of the Apostles showed that God, who is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, does not dwell in temples built by human hands.[48] Yet at the Incarnation the Eternal had compressed His being in order to dwell in a virgin's body. Mary's womb was, therefore, the temple not built with hands, which fulfilled the function which Solomon's great work could not fulfil.

In the expositions of the dogmatists, as has been mentioned earlier, Mary had already been compared to a temple. This analogy was so consistently maintained that in theological discussions the one idea was interchangeable with the other. When Hieronymus directed his accusations against Helvidius, who had dared to assert that Jesus had had brothers and sisters in the flesh, he charged him with having in heretical fury put into practice a Herostratic deed. "Thou hast followed," said he, "the example of that madman, who, to make himself famous, set on fire the temple of Diana. Thou hast sought to burn up the temple of God, and hast defiled the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, since thou hast let two brothers and a number of sisters be born of the Virgin."[49]

Thus, just as it was a heathenish deed to deny Mary's absolute purity, so it was a pious duty to emphasise all her virtues. The Virgin's qualities were the materials out of which a temple was built, and for such a building no objects could be too costly. Here we come to another point of comparison between the Madonna and the most famous building in the Old Testament. Mary, says Birgitta, was the new "Solomon's temple" erected by Him of whom the Jewish king was a prototype. The temple's gold was her virtue, and her humility was the ivory that covered its walls. So

shining and costly was the house in which, as Birgitta expresses it, the true Solomon "walked and rested."[50]

The symbolism of a temple was naturally often used also in religious hymns, and it received a quite special importance in prayers to Mary. For the Catholic temple, by reason of the doctrine of the Sacramental Incarnation, was not only a "House of God," but it was also an asylum in which men could always feel safe from persecution. Just as the pious could get from "the tower Mary" "shields and all kinds of weapons of mighty men" to defend themselves against the attack of the devil, so in "the temple Mary" they could take refuge from all his onslaughts. "Ave templum sanctum Dei," men invoked her, and continued, "ad quod currunt omnes rei—ut ab hoste liberentur—a quo capti detinentur":[51] "Hail, holy temple of God—to whom all sinners hasten—to be freed from the enemy—who holds them captive."

God's dwelling-place was not necessarily conceived of as a temple, however. The Saviour was also a king, and His mother's womb was therefore a kingly castle. "Aula regalis" Mary is often called in the Latin hymns. She was a "splendidum palatium," "a shining palace for the Lord of Eternity," and she was the wedding chamber, where the Creator united Himself with His Creation.[52] But the Madonna could also be likened to far less impressive pieces of architecture. She was the tent of the Covenant into which God had entered to carry out the work of the Atonement, and she was the Holy Tabernacle that was "filled with the glory of the Lord."[53] Further, if the faithful recollected that it was only for a time that the Highest dwelt in her body, they were led to another group of similes. It was with her that He stayed when He began His residence on earth.

Therefore Mary was a lodging-house, and, as such, the foremost of her kind. "For," says Dante, "it was fitting that the lodging where the King of Heaven stayed should be perfectly blameless and pure."[54] If one regards this comparison as too ordinary, one is still more astonished to find Mary characterised as a "guardarobba." To Catholic symbolism, however, there is nothing extravagant in calling the Virgin's womb a wardrobe.[55] It was, we are told, in this room that the Godhead clothed Himself in the dress of the human shape, to go forth into the world like an earthly being. By an inversion of the analogy, the cloak-room in the church, where the priest puts on his raiment for Mass, to celebrate in the Saviour's stead the renewed sacrifice, is compared to Mary's womb;[56] and Mary in her turn is called, by the name of the holiest of wardrobes, a sacristy for the Trinity.[57] Often, too, the indefinite idea of a "room for God," "camera trinitatis," was employed,[58] and "domus," which applies to all the different kinds of buildings, is one of the most frequent epithets used in praise of the Madonna. In poems of a simpler style the Virgin's body is quite commonly named "the little house," in which the Great One dwelt in the form of a child. It is in this way that an anonymous fifteenth-century bard expresses himself in a song which forms a naïve contrast to Birgitta's stately description of the model where the true Solomon "walked and rested":—

Ich weisz ein hübsches Häuselein
Da lauft ein Kindlein aus und ein.
Es mag wohl Jesus Christus sein,
Maria ist das Häuselein.[59]

From this class of symbols betokening different kinds of dwelling-places, it is most natural to pass on to some

smaller constructions which have been compared to the Virgin. When the new Solomon left his heavenly throne—in order, as Zeno of Verona expresses it, to "enter the Virgin temple's sanctuary, and to rest satisfied in the flowering abode of chastity"[60]—Mary became his royal seat. "Sedes Salomonis" is therefore one of the Madonna's standing attributes.[61] It was all the easier to use this name, since Solomon's splendid bed and "chariot" are described in the Song of Solomon (iii. 7-10), from which so many of the symbols of the Madonna are drawn. Mary was literally a throne when she held her Divine Son on her knee, and she was a "chariot" in which He let Himself be borne to suffering mankind; for the Divine Incarnation was often conceived of as a journey, in which His mother was the means of conveyance. In accordance with this view Mary was further characterised as a shining and heavenly carriage. Ephraim Syrus, who, even when he describes the little Child, emphasises the flaming majesty of the Godhead, compares Mary to Ezekiel's burning carriage, "which shook under the glory of the Lord, while the Virgin's weak knees bore Him without being consumed."[62] In later poets, *e.g.* in Dante, the prophet's vision has been applied to the Christian Church.[63] But Mary is often spoken of also as "the most worthy chariot in which the King of Honour was pleased to visit sick and languishing mankind." In Nigils Ragvaldi's old Swedish interpretation of this originally Latin text, the Virgin, with a Northern local colouring, even bears the name of "sledge."[64] It may be added, to account further for the symbolism of the chariot, that Mary is a carriage in which her adherents can ascend to Heaven.[65]

Of all means of conveyance, however, none is better suited to be compared to the Madonna than a ship

which brings its gifts from far lands. Ephraim Syrus likens Mary to the vessel carrying a luck-bringing cargo.[66] This simile was all the easier to find, inasmuch as in its panegyric of the virtuous wife—who is more precious than the costliest pearls—the Book of Proverbs makes use of the expression: "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar" (xxxi. 14). In the Latin translation of this passage the term food is rendered by *panis*, a word which naturally calls to mind "the bread of life," the cargo of the vessel Mary. Thus the analogy could be carried through even in small details.[67] The allegorising imagination found an attractive task in seeking among Mary's characteristics the moral counterparts of the mast, the anchor, the planks, and the sails. Such a symbolical ship—as described, for example, in an old French *serventois*[68]—was, however, both nautically and poetically, a very artificial thing. On the other hand, there is nothing unnatural or strained in that German folk-song which poetically develops Ephraim Syrus's ancient simile:—

Es kommt ein Schiff geladen
Recht auf sein höchstes Port.[69]
. . . .

If Mary could once be likened to a ship in general, it was all the more fitting to see a correspondence to her in those craft which had won fame in Biblical history. Moses was a prototype of her Son; therefore she herself, it was said, had been prefigured by the chest, in which Moses had lain out on the water.[70] But a worthier symbol of the Madonna was that ancestor of all vessels, the Ark, in which Noah saved creation from the Flood. When Mary was created, a new Noah's Ark was formed for the salvation of the world;[71] and when she received the Annunciation, then not all animals,

but the Lord of all animals and of mankind entered into the house of salvation.[72] The old Ark knew that its work would be repeated and surpassed, for on the night when Mary gave birth to her Child the planks of Noah's vessel sent out fresh shoots, where they lay on Mount Ararat.[73] There was, it appears, a telepathic sympathy between the two Arks which corresponded with one another in so many respects. Every physical quality in Noah's building had its counterpart in some mental quality in Mary. We have only to read how Birgitta expounds the likenesses and points of difference between these two ships. Noah was pleased because his Ark was so well tarred both without and within that nothing unclean could enter it, and God was pleased because Mary was so well suffused with the unction of the Holy Spirit that no earthly desire could approach her heart. Noah was pleased because his Ark was so spacious and large that all creatures could be housed in it, while God was pleased because He whose greatness is inconceivable could "lie and turn" in Mary's blessed womb. Noah's Ark was light, just as Mary's virginity was clear and pure. In addition to these and other analogies, however, there was an essential difference. Noah knew that his Ark would be empty when he left it, and that he would never again have anything to do with his temporary dwelling-place; but God knew that, even after His birth, His mother would remain filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that, even though He were separated from her body at His birth, she would be close to Him for all time.[74]

This last difference refers, of course, to Mary's Assumption. As has been explained, it was just because the Madonna had been an Ark for the Divinity, that her body might not remain on the earth; but it

was not Noah's Ark that was referred to in the legend of the Virgin's Ascension. The miracles that took place at the bier of her dead body were borrowed from the stories of the Ark *par excellence*, the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant. The palladium of the Jewish nation was the type which best corresponded to her in whose person the new covenant—between God and the entire human race—had been sealed. In the Ark Moses had enclosed the most precious tokens of the Highest's care for His people: Aaron's flowering staff, a golden vessel with manna, and the two Tables of the Law. The staff was in itself a symbol of the Incarnation; the golden vessel, "urna aurea," with its heaven-sent contents,[75] was a natural image of the Virgin, in whose body God had descended from Heaven; and the Tables of Stone, which represented the summing-up of all necessary knowledge, corresponded to Him in whose life and teaching the law had been fulfilled. The Ark itself, again, was surrounded everywhere by a rich gilding, which betokened the perfect sanctity of Mary's being. Therefore, as early as in one of the famous sermons on the Madonna by Proclus, the Virgin had been called an Ark gilded both within and without.[76] The epithet has played an important part both in religious and secular poetry,[77] and it still survives in the words of endearment of the Swedish love-song—which would be unintelligible if one did not know the symbolism of Mary—"Thou noble rose and gilded shrine."

Among the Jewish ritual-implements there are others also which were chosen as symbols of Mary. The censer hanging in front of the Ark of the Covenant prefigured her being, which was perfumed with virtue and which took into itself the living fire. The thought that the Virgin bore coals in her womb without being

consumed had been lovingly developed by Ephraim Syrus in his hymns;[78] and the analogy between the Madonna and the censer, as was pointed out in the foregoing chapter, was applied to the stories of how Mary like a cloud of incense went up through Heaven to the Son's throne. Thus, all the objects kept in the Holy of holies were associated with the Holiest of mankind. Moreover, in front of the veil there stood, in the outer tabernacle, other images of the pure Virgin. Mary was the candelabrum that supported on its seven golden arms the heavenly light,[79] and she was the Table on which the Shewbread was exposed to view.[80] And as Bread, the type of food, was a symbol of the Saviour, so His mother was logically betokened by all the articles of furniture which supported or enclosed that holy substance. This reasoning had, of course, a still greater applicability in the case of the implements of Christian ritual. If the Madonna was the table in the tabernacle, she was likened with still better reason to the altar-table on which the Eucharistic God rested in the form of bread; and if she was the golden manna-urn, she was also the shrine for the Host; the tower, the dove, or the tabernacle that preserved the transformed wafers.

All these epithets denote worthy store-rooms for holy contents, and they are therefore well suited for use in pious poems. On the other hand, we cannot from a purely aesthetic standpoint consider the theologians quite happy in comparing the Madonna's body to a wine-cellar, "cella vinaria," even though we may understand how naturally the Mass-symbolism led to this image.[81] It is also more ingenious than effective to call the pure Virgin a library, in which all the books of the Old and New Testaments have been set up.[82]

In better style is the simile of the box of sweet perfumes, which often appears in the poetry of Mary. The Madonna, we read, is a treasury in which the most costly spices and salves mingle their scents, as the noble trees mix their fruits in the enclosed garden of the Song of Solomon. Thus Adam de S. Victor sings in praise of the Virgin :—

Porta clausa, fons hortorum,
Cella custos unguentorum,
Cella pigmentaria.
Cinnamoni calamum,
Myrrham, thus et balsamum
Superas fragrantia.[83]

Such a list is as poetic in its import as it is firm and rhythmical in its metrical structure, but the fine original loses a good deal of its effect upon us when an anonymous German translator, instead of "cella pigmentaria," introduces the name of that room for the blending of rich scents, which is called an Apothecary's shop :—

Port beslozzen, gartes brunne,
Apothek mit lobes wunne,
Und ein cell mit lutertranc,
Cumin, balsam und citewar,
Mirr, wirouch, aster rotvar
Fürtriffst du und rosen blanc.[84]

The majority of the similes described in the preceding pages have referred to things which have been made by men, or which have, at any rate, received their peculiar shape through human intervention. All the different chests and arks, vessels and buildings, are artefacts, and so, too, in their way, are the sealed springs and the enclosed pleasure-gardens. They are each the foremost of their kind, and therefore worthy of comparison with the foremost of God's creations; but they are, nevertheless, in their idea less than that which

is compared to them, and they can therefore illustrate only certain special qualities—purity, beauty, or grace—in the Virgin. If it was desired to express the sublimity of the Mother of God, the symbols ought not to be chosen from among the second-hand products of human manufacture. Only the sights of nature were great enough to be likened to her, whose being was raised above all human measure; and as a matter of fact we find many notable epithets of Mary which fall within the sphere of that original creation, which is untouched by human hand. The Madonna is not only a garden, but she is also, in her miraculous motherhood, the unploughed field which gives seed without having been cultivated.[85] She is not only a "hortus inclusus," but she is also—we have only to read the beautiful descriptions in Gautier de Coincy and Gonzalo da Bercéo—the free meadow full of wild flowers.[86] Further, she is that which constitutes the greatest and most sublime portion of a wild landscape, for as the Mother of God she is compared to the lofty mountain.

It has already been mentioned, in treating of Mary's history, that an analogy was established between the rock which enclosed the dead God-man and the Virgin who carried Him in her womb. Another analogy between the mountain and the Madonna was based on the fact that the Saviour was born of His mother without pain and without the assistance of midwives. In an old Christmas hymn, ascribed to Ambrosius, the new-born Child is addressed with these epithets among others:—

Lapis de monte veniens
Mundumque replens gratia
Quem non praecisum manibus
Vates vetusti nuntiant.[87]

"A stone which, according to the prophecy of the old

seers, comes down from the mountain without having been loosened by the hands of men, and fills the world with blessing."

The old prognostication, to which the hymn refers, is Daniel's narrative of the colossus on clay feet which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.—Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel ii. 34-35).

It was natural for the oppressed Jews to see in Daniel's prophecy a promise of the restoration of their own power through the national Messiah. To the Christians persecuted in the first centuries the same prophecy gave a hope of better times for their community; and when the Church had been established and had conquered heathendom, the promise seemed to have been fulfilled. The stone which struck the image had become a great mountain that filled the whole world. Thus, when "the conquering Galilean" gave a meaning to that part of the simile in which the fall of the colossus was spoken of, people began to look for something corresponding to the assertion that the stone "was loosened without hands" from the mountain. That supernatural fact was placed in connection with the supernatural manner in which the Saviour had appeared in the world. The little stone that grew and grew until it filled the earth, was like a little child which matures into a giant; and the mountain, from the bosom of which the stone spontaneously loosens itself, was the child's mother.

Such an interpretation was all the more natural, because, from another point of view also, the mountain could be explained as a symbol of the Virgin Mary. In his Commentary on the Books of Kings, Gregory I. says of the place in which Mount Ephraim is spoken of: "By this name can the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, also be continually denoted, for was she not a mountain who with her high dignity rose above the height of all other human beings? And was not Mary like a mountain-top when, in order to receive the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, she extended the peak of her virtues above all the angel-hosts, up to the throne of God?"[88] In accordance with this reasoning "mons sublimus," the lofty mountain, resting upon the earth but rising up over the clouds, became an epithet of the Madonna, which was often used both in sermons and writings.

In its quality of belonging at once to the lower and to the higher world, the symbol of a mountain corresponds with certain other emblems of Mary. For the Mother of God was, as theologians expressed it, the hyphen between Heaven and Earth. Everything which, either for the thought or for the imagination, united the two kingdoms, could be interpreted as a symbol of her mediation. She was "scala coeli," the heavenly ladder which Jacob saw in his dream, and down which God descended to men.[89] She was the rainbow, *i.e.* the visible bridge which stretches its arch across the skies from Earth to Heaven and from Heaven to Earth.[90] She was the opening or gate through which men could enter the Paradise of Heaven—"Fenestra coeli," the window of Heaven, she was often called in the prayers with which the pious invoked her for their souls' safety. But Mary was even more than this. When God left His Heaven for her womb, His mother became a

new Heaven. "Ave mater cœlum," Johannes Chrysostomus invokes her in one of his sermons.[91]

The believers also saw tokens of Mary's qualities in the sights which give Heaven its splendour. The sun and moon recalled her beauty, and she would doubtless often have been called a sun of the world, had not this epithet been reserved for her Divine Son. The moon, on the other hand, became her standing emblem, as it had been the attribute of the chaste Diana of heathendom. By reason of various associations of ideas, the star has also been regarded as an apposite symbol of the Madonna. It sends out its light without itself losing any of its brightness, just as Mary gave birth to her Child without forfeiting her virginity. It is smaller and weaker than the sun, but as a morning star it can announce the advent of the great light, just as Mary announces Jesus. God's Mother is therefore the star which bears the sun, "stella solem pariens," and she is the first herald of the morning twilight, "stella matutina." Still more frequently, however, she bears the name by which she is invoked in the prayer "Ave Maris stella," "Hail, Star of the Sea." This expression is often explained as an interpretation of the Virgin's Hebrew name "Miriam," and it is even possible that it originated from a mistake in translation;[92] but that it became naturalised in poetry and pious literature was rather due to the fact that men looked up to Mary from "the sea of the world and of sin," as to a star of comfort. The old song "Stella Maris" has, both in public services and in private piety, become one of the most frequently occurring devotional expressions of Catholic religious life. On shipboard it has been breathed up innumerable times by sailors who in storms sought help from the mild goddess who was "the Star of the Sea,"

and who for those in peril opened a "window" in the dark and threatening skies.[93]

Among the heavenly symbols of Mary is also to be found the last, and poetically the most noteworthy of all the many shrines which served as similes of the Holy Virgin. When the Saviour had once been looked upon as a sun, His mother naturally had her counterpart in that which enclosed the sun. The sun is often hidden in clouds; therefore Mary is the cloud which hides the great light. By the same reasoning, as has already been mentioned, the Host was characterised as a cloud which God drew over Himself in order that the eyes of men might not be blinded by His glory. If rightly interpreted, the Old Testament metaphors could offer much support for such a view. The cloud brought to the earth the rain, which, according to the Jewish idea, was the type of all blessing. In a cloud God had revealed Himself to His people during the wandering in the wilderness (Exodus xvi. 10), and in a cloud He filled His temple (1 Kings viii. 10). In a cloud also, according to Daniel's dream (vii. 13), "the Son of Man" would be brought before "the Ancient of Days," who gave Him "dominion and glory and a kingdom."[94] A still more direct application to the Madonna could be drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah (xix. 1), "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift [according to the Vulgate, *light*] cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." In this passage was seen a prophecy of the flight into Egypt, and the miracles which took place during the journey of the Holy Family. The analogy was all the more complete because the apocryphal narrative of the destruction of the idols had probably been composed simply to give confirmation to Isaiah's prog-

nostication. Thus to theologians and poets Mary became the "light cloud," which bore the Saviour in its womb;[95] and she was also the beneficent rain-cloud, which at Elijah's prayer rose up from the sea and gave moisture to the dried-up fields.[96]

The symbolism of the cloud gained a still richer significance when it was used in descriptions of the birth of Christ. As early as in late mediaeval poetry it became customary to sing of God's appearance on earth by paraphrasing some verses of the 19th Psalm: "Like a bridegroom from his bridal chamber," it was said, He came forth from the temple of Mary. This stately simile had, as we have already seen, been conceived by a poet who had been fascinated by the sight of the daylight, when it breaks forth over the firmament. The bridegroom is the sun who "exults to run his course from one end of the heavens to the other," and the bridal chamber is the eastern sky which is coloured red and gold at sunrise, or those clouds which shine with the light hidden behind them. Thus when Mary's temple, *i.e.* her virginal body, is likened to the adorned chamber of the bridegroom, the figure of the earthly woman has borrowed beauty from the most splendid sight in nature. Her being shines with divine light in the same way that the clouds are shone through by the sun;[97] and the relationship between the mother's littleness and the Son's greatness is clearly expressed in the difference between the cloud, which has no light of its own, and the sun, which only for a time can be concealed by its shimmering covering. Thus the cloud-symbolism was used by preference by the poets who tried to make clear in ingenious similes the subordination of one of the Holy Persons to the other.

Since Mary, as a shining cloud, was the herald of

the sun, she could naturally be associated also with other ideas of the morning twilight and the beginning of day. It was on the basis of such an association of ideas that the comparisons between the bride and the morning red in the Song of Solomon were thought particularly applicable to the Madonna. The same line of reasoning led the early rhetoricians to employ a simile which became famous in mediaeval and renaissance poetry. In his invocation to S. Francis, Dante says that Assisi ought properly to be called "Oriente," because a sun has gone forth from this town;[98] and Romeo exclaims:—

> But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!

One is reminded of these magnificent tropes when one reads in Ephraim Syrus: "The East with its [pàle] stars is an image of Mary, from whose womb the Lord of all the stars went forth."[99] With all their strained search after allegories the old theologians could still find some images which had a powerful effect and a strong poetic vitality.

With the symbolisation of Mary by the early morning hours, can be associated the idea of her representing the Spring.[100] She was the harbinger of the Summer, as of the day, and the month of flowers, May, bore her name: "le mois de Marie." On the other hand—for in her person contrasts meet—the stillness of evening twilight was sanctified to her who at the time of the *Ave* was wedded to God. The rest after the labours of the day was suitable for devotion to the Mother of God, and Saturday, which was the evening of the week of toil, was pre-eminently the day of the Madonna.

An attempt has here been made to comment upon the most important of the epithets used in the litera-

ture of the Madonna; but it has not been possible to achieve any completeness in the summary. In excuse for the omissions in this chapter, however, it may be said that, as Bernard of Morlas expressed it, the number of Mary's virtues would cause even the profoundest and most eloquent understanding to succumb under the task of describing them: "Sic est densa, sic immensa—laudis tuae copia—ut profunda et facunda—succumbant ingenia."[101] It is a no less difficult task to classify all the things and phenomena with which Mary has been compared. It is possible, as has been done here, to arrange a number of them in small groups, referring to certain special qualities of the Virgin or to certain fixed events in her life; but whatever system of analysis be used, a quantity of epithets will always remain, for which we must employ the makeshift heading "Miscellaneous." The only consolation is that such a division of unclassified similes does not include any notable materials for the characterisation of the Madonna. Therefore, on the basis of the likenesses and symbols which have been described in the preceding pages, we ought to be able to gain an idea of Mary's being as it appeared to the imagination of pious poets. That the picture may be clear, it is only necessary shortly to recapitulate the list of the Virgin's similes.

It has appeared that the whole sphere of life and of nature was searched for symbols to illustrate the Madonna's virginity and high motherhood. All that was pure and lovely, and all that was high and great, was enlisted in the praise of her glory. She became inaccessible as the walled-in garden, the closed gate or the sealed fountain. She was beautiful as the most splendid objects human art could produce: a decorated shrine, a golden urn, a kingly throne, a palace, a temple, and a church. She was mighty and strong as a fortress

or as the lofty tower of David. But she was at the same time shy as a young girl, affectionate as a bride, proud as a wife, and venerable as a mother. All the caressing and flattering likenesses, with which men have sung their beloved, were applied to her who united in herself all the dignities of womanhood. She was the flower of the valleys, the rose among thorns, the lily among thistles, and the dove of the rocks that hides itself in the mountain-clefts. And if these fair things lent their grace to the Virgin's figure, her greatness was set forth by the sights of nature, which are too sublime to be compared with earthly things. The lofty mountain's scaling of Heaven, the infinity of the sea, the fruitfulness of the earth, the clearness of the air and the light of the skies become qualities of the Mother of God.

Thus, as early as the first centuries, there was developed an idea which during the Middle Ages was formulated by theologians, and which in its shape is a play upon words, but in its import conceals a significant meaning. Pious authors quoted the tenth verse in Genesis: "The gathering together of the waters called He [God] Seas"—"Congregationes aquarum appelavit *Maria*"; and they continued, "congregationes gratiarum appelantur *Maria*"—"but the gathering together of grace and beauty is called Maria."[102] As the innumerable waves meet in the infinite sea, so all separate beauty meets in the figure of Mary. It was not merely a theological principle or a moral pattern that was honoured in the Madonna. In her name was worshipped the whole visible and invisible creation, as it radiates upon us, when it is conceived of as a covering for a spiritual principle, or when it shines in the light of a symbol hidden behind the world of phenomena.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SACRED SHRINE

Die Seel' ist ein Kristall, die Gottheit ist ihr Schein,
Der Leib, in dem Du lebst, ist ihrer beiden Schrein.

ANGELUS SILESIUS, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann.*

IT may be urged, with an appearance of justification, that it is at an arbitrary point that this work breaks off. The history of Mary does not end when her body is taken up to Heaven and she occupies her place by the side of the Trinity. On the contrary, at this moment begins a new stage of the Madonna's life, which in a way is more important than her earthly existence. By the miracles she has performed and still performs, she enters into familiar relations with created beings. Her motherhood is widened, for now it embraces not only "the Son of Man," but all the children of men. As the Divinity no longer claims her care, she can bestow her love instead upon all who need a mother's help; and such help none can give so richly as she, who has experienced the highest that motherhood implies. She understands earthly existence, because, without being defiled by its baseness, she herself has experienced all its joys and pains, as bride and wife, and as a happy and a sorrowing mother. Her sympathy with suffering is rich and generous, because she has known misfortune but is herself no longer weighed down by it. As the

absolutely pure being, she can give assistance to those who strive against temptation, and she can lend encouragement to those oppressed by the grief which she herself has overcome. But she is also a true mother, in that she helps her wards even when their desires are childish and unimportant. In their daily life she stands at their side, orders their affairs aright for them, and nods warnings or friendly approval at them from her images.

About all these great and small miracles legends have been written, songs sung, and pictures painted without number; but all that the Madonna has effected in human life belongs to a different story from that which we have wished to describe here. We can with good reason exclude all the narratives and symbols which refer to the time after Mary's Assumption, because from them no fresh light is to be gained with reference to her relationship to the Divinity. It is only for the explanation of this relation that the writings of pious thinkers concerning the Madonna have been summarised in what goes before. In this respect our summary ought to have been sufficiently complete to justify some general conclusions in regard to the religious and aesthetic life which expresses itself in the Poetry and Art of the Catholic Church.

It has become apparent that the same idea of the connection of the Creator with creation, *i.e.* of the Divine Incarnation, which was the basis for the thought-structure of the Mass-doctrine, has been a cause—not the only one, but the fundamental one—of the worship of the Madonna. The two dogmas by which the Catholic Church separates itself from the Reformed creeds are derived from a common principle; and just as they are based on the same fundamental doctrine,

so they correspond with one another in the corollaries which have been deduced from the thesis. Thus in the Madonna-cult one is perpetually reminded of legendary and symbolic motives which one has learned to know in the Mass-ritual. Not only is the actual miracle the same in either case, but in each the great paradox is formulated in similar antitheses. Just as the Mass-miracle is said to consist in the priest being able "to create his own Creator," so the Incarnation is characterised as an event at which "an earthly woman gives life to her own Creator," at which "a daughter gives birth to her Father," and at which "the Maker of all things allows Himself to be made." The magically effective words of the priest answer to the words with which Gabriel greeted Mary. It is the ringing of a bell which signifies to the pious both that the Highest has descended over the altar and that He has taken up His abode in the Virgin's womb. Just as the *Ave*-toll recalls the idea that Heaven was joined to Earth in the body of Mary, so the sound-signals in the Mass are to awake the thought of the Incarnation of God in human form. According to Catholic symbolism the altar is a manger, and the manger is often represented in early art as an altar. But the table which bears the holy bread is also a symbol of the body of that woman who bore the Divine Child; and her womb, that of a mother yet closed like a virgin's, is a magical room in the same way that the old altar-room enclosed with curtains was a sorcerer's cabinet, in which the great transformation took place without its process being visible. The altar again is conceived of as a grave, while the Madonna stands for the earth, which, according to the universal mythological conceptions, is at the same time the mother of mankind and the tomb of men.

Significant analogies between the Mass-doctrine and the cult of the Madonna are met with even in the means by which the miracle was brought about. When the young woman became a mother without losing her virginity, this was due to the fact that the Holy Ghost had "overshadowed" her; and when the bread is transformed into a God without changing its shape, the Holy Ghost has descended over the Mass-table. Accordingly, in old churches a carved dove was hung up, which with its wings "overshadowed" the holy place. In pictures of the Annunciation, the same dove floats down from Heaven towards the Virgin's bowed head. In the illustrations to those legends—according to Church dogma, heretical—which tell of some visible Mass-miracles, a little child is often seen, lifted above the altar on the hands of the priest; and even in pictures of the Annunciation, likewise on the basis of an heretical idea, there appears a little child descending towards his mother.

These are, however, external and relatively unessential analogies. The crucial point is that the worship of the Sacrament and the worship of the Madonna are characterised by the same veneration for the inviolability of Holiness. In their manner of handling the bread and wine, and of regarding and describing the Madonna, the pious seek to observe the greatest conceivable reverence. The Host, it is said, is so pure that it may only be touched by pure hands, and if a man washes himself after having touched it, it is only an unbeliever who can see in that washing a purification. In the same way both the Divine Child and His human mother are so pure that they cannot be purified, but themselves cleanse the water with which they have been washed. The room which preserves the eucharistic God is fitted and embellished as the fore-

most of all the shrines which artistic craftsmanship can produce; and the body in which the Incarnate God rested is described as the most perfect of all the shapes of which poetic imagination can create an ideal picture. In the legends of Mary's life features are introduced which are borrowed from narratives concerning the most famous shrines of earlier ages. When the Virgin's dead body is borne to the grave it performs the same miracles as the Jewish Ark of the Covenant; but it is raised from out the grave because, by reason of what it once enclosed, it is too holy to be allowed to decay in the earth. Again, when artists render this Assumption, they make Mary be carried by angels, who form an almond-shaped glory around her figure; and the same disposition appears in pictures which, undoubtedly with a symbolical reference to Mary, represent a monstrance borne up on angel-hands to Heaven.[1] It even happens that the connection between Mary and the Host-preserver is called to mind in pictures of the Assumption by making some Hosts float down from the Queen of Heaven's mantle.[2] The two series of symbols continually blend, so that in some cases it becomes positively difficult to decide which one of the sacred shrines is glorified in a given poem or picture.

This double significance of Catholic symbols is excellently illustrated in one of the visions seen by the German seeress, Anna Katharina Emmerich. "I saw," she relates, "how the Holy Virgin's figure was enclosed by an image that filled the whole temple, and with its apparition threw into shade all the light of it. I saw under Mary's heart a glory, and understood that this radiance betokened the promise of God's most holy blessing. But I saw also that the glory was surrounded by the Ark of Noah, so that Mary's head arose above

the Ark. Then I saw that the Ark was transformed into an Ark of the Covenant, and that again gave place to a temple. Finally, the temple, too, disappeared, and from the glory came forth a Mass-chalice before Mary's breast, and over the chalice there shone before Mary's mouth a wafer bearing the sign of the Cross." §

In this, as in nearly all the meditations of the pious German woman, it may be observed how the visions are compiled out of impressions from devotional pictures and recollections of early religious literature. Anna Katharina Emmerich was versed in the Apocryphal traditions, and had a good knowledge of the Church's system of symbols; but she had not mastered in its entirety the wide sphere of the Catholic teaching on this matter. Had she done so, she would have been able to see in imagination a still longer series of "dissolving views." She might have seen how Mary's figure includes one after another of those shrines which became holy by reason of their costly or divine contents: the grave, whose contours passed into the form of the altar; the saint-chest, which disappeared into the altar-reredos, which became in its turn a Host-preserver; and the tabernacle for the holy bread, which is likened by theologians to the mind of faithful communicants. She might have seen how, in a last transformation scene, the Mother of God, too, is lost in a symbolical shrine which is as great and inclusive as the whole visible world, and which is sanctified by God's union with creation. So close is the connection between the Catholic emblems that the mind spontaneously glides from one symbol to the other—from works of art to life, from life to the world, and from the world back to those human minds in which all these marvellous ideas have been produced and combined with each other.

In their rhetorical hymns the Church's poets summon the thinkers of all time to bear amazed witness to the miracle of infinity being able to compress itself into the shape of a little wafer, and of an earthly creature being able to include that for which the world has no boundary. These hymns indeed continue to fulfil their purpose, even if in a different way from that intended; for they cannot be read without a feeling of amazement at the sovereignty and power of pious imagination over uncritical faith.[4] But not only are we surprised at all the conclusions which have been reached from errors of translation, plays upon words and naïve argumentation; we may severely maintain a rational disapproval of the theologians' manner of misusing that rhetorical ambiguity, the *équivoque*, under whose influence "tout sens devint douteux, tout mot eut deux visages";[5] we may carefully defend ourselves against the insidious smuggling-in of poetic symbols in a logical demonstration—a process which makes of the arguments coins with a double impress, which cannot be set in circulation without intentionally or unintentionally compromising one's intellectual honesty. Yet we cannot refuse our admiration to the powerful work shaped during the ages by pious thought and pious art in collaboration. If once for all we put aside the question of truth, we are justified in judging theological constructions as purely aesthetic phenomena; that is to say, we can regard the Catholic Mass-doctrine and the cult of the Madonna as a poem, into which the faithful have introduced their ideas of the union of infinity with what is earthly. This poem is naïvely poetical, because in the description of Mary's history and in the choice of her symbols it expresses the worship of the beauty of Nature and of Life; but it is at the same time romantic and pessi-

mistic, because in its radical idealisation of Mary's history it expresses the purely biological discontent with all the low and earth-bound elements inherent in the phenomena of earthly existence. By striving to release, in imagination at least, one person from all the impurity of human life, religious fancy has given form to the race's dreams of an existence more perfect and more pure than life as it is. In doing so it has, in spite of all the objections that may be raised by a contented and serene optimism, served a need which is not only religious and theological, but which is also aesthetic in the most universal and purely human sense of the word. All the grotesqueness in the strainedly ingenious expositions of Mary's anatomical virginity, and all the painful refinements in the ordinances for the handling of the Sacrament, ought not to conceal the poetic feeling lying at the foundation of these extraordinary structures of thought; and the bizarre elements in the reasoning ought not to blind us to the fact that there is in any case an imposing unity and, in a purely formal respect, a logical sequence in these constructions.

Such aesthetically philosophic systems as the Catholic doctrines of the Mass and the Madonna could only be developed during a period which did not recognise the right of doubt or criticism in the presence of that in which a divine revelation was seen. The mediaeval scholastics knew—with an enviable certainty—all that man needed to know about life and the world. To us, who know nothing, their views can give no answer concerning the idle questions of thought. As regards their intellectual import, we cannot from the Church's doctrines draw knowledge of anything save the strayings of the human mind. But Catholic dogma can be regarded also as something other than

a theory. By all the artistic production germinating in the life of faith, and by all the unconscious and unpremeditated poetry concealed in the theological structures, the early Christian and mediaeval view of life has something to say even to an agnostic inquirer. It is not entirely dead, because it has been something more than an edifice of thought; that is to say, because mental longings and bodily attitudes of devotion and veneration have been immortalised in the living and visible forms of art.

Like all strange and remote art, this production can be fully understood only if we try with critical sympathy to place ourselves at a point of view which is not our own. Yet there is perhaps something in the Church's art which can come near to us immediately, and without any advances from our side. However completely we may have freed ourselves from religious doctrines, we still retain certain illusions, or rather certain inevitable perceptions of life, which enable us to understand the power of the ancient symbols over men's minds. The world has become wider since it discarded those doctrines according to which the earth was the centre of the universe; and man has lost his rank of being the Prince of Creation. None the less, in this fortuitous life which does not know its purpose, there are moments when the great seems to compress itself into the little, and when thoughts or impressions make the mind a covering for contents "that the worlds are too narrow to include." There are experiences during which infinity seems to descend upon the finite, and during which men lift their happiness on high, with the pride of the officiant, with the humility of the receiver, and with the trembling reverence of him who knows that he bears in his hands some-

thing great and costly, which must not be wasted or profaned. Without presuming to explain the unknown, it should be recognised that existence in its joys and in its toils—which is what the faithful symbolically term bread and wine—can appear worthy of being regarded with the reverence which constitutes the innermost being of Church art. Where such a view of life prevails, there, independently of all religious ideas, the old pictures and poems may still call forth that response of recognition which all living art has the power to evoke.

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. For a more detailed treatment of the religious art of the lower races the reader may be referred to the author's article, "Art Origins," in Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. i. Allied questions are also treated in the author's earlier publications, *The Origins of Art*, and *Skildringar ur Pueblofolkens Konstlif* (The Art-life of the Pueblo Indians).

2. Cf. *e.g.* Shairp's utterances on the nature-feeling of the Puritan poets (*Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, pp. 108-109), and Coquerel's reflections on the naturalism of the Protestant portrait-painters (*Rembrandt et l'individualisme dans l'art, passim*). It is not possible here to embark on the important questions of the relation of the Reformation to Art. The difference between Protestant and Catholic views of Art is excellently illustrated in the controversy that was occasioned by Eugène Müntz's articles "L'Art et le protestantisme" (in *La Revue des revues*, March and July 1900). Cf. especially N. Weiss, "L'Art et le protestantisme," in *Bulletin historique et littéraire* (Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français), No. 10, 1900, pp. 505-535.

For the influence of the form of religion on literature among the Protestant nations, cf. Texte, *J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 444 (Collection of the utterances of Mme. de Staël, de Villers, Bonstetten, Sismondi, and Benjamin Constant).

3. Cf. especially Chateaubriand, *Génie du christianisme*, 1ère partie, livre 1; 4ème partie, livres 1-2.

4. Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben*, Buch 7.

5. Cf. Dom Guéranger, *Institutions liturgiques*, i. p. 95, on the life of the community during the earlier Middle Ages. "For the faithful the Church took the place of both theatre and forum."

6. Otte, *Handbuch der kirchlichen Kunstarchäologie*, i. pp. 10 and 13; Bergner, *Handbuch der kirchlichen Kunstalterthümer*, p. 260.

7. Dietrichson, *Omrids af den kirkelige Kunstarkaeologi*, p. 87.

8. Schultze, *Archäologie der christlichen Kunst*, p. 123.

9. Cf. *e.g. Historia Francorum*, x. 15, "sanctae crucis arca." A reference to this expression of Gregory of Tours will be found in Viollet le Duc's *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 15.

CHAPTER II

1. On the difference between "arcosol graves" and "sepolcri a mensa," see Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, p. 229.

2. The theory that the catacomb chapels were the model for the churches

above ground is suggested already by Seroux d'Agincourt, *Storia dell' arte dimostrata coi monumenti*, i. pp. 143-146, especially p. 145 : "Il carattere che l' architettura offriva ne' monumenti religiosi delle catacombe, modificò quello che prese al di fuori, quando il cristianesimo cominciò a godere d' un intera libertà." This view has probably been widely spread by Wiseman's famous novel, *Fabiola*, p. 188 : "The early Christians thus anticipated underground, or rather gave the principles which directed, the forms of ecclesiastical architecture." An attempt to explain the transept of the basilica—with triumphal arch and apse—as a gigantically enlarged copy of the monumental arcosol graves in the Catacombs has been made by J. P. Richter in his *Der Ursprung der abendländischen Kirchengebäude*, pp. 41-44.

That the table-like sarcophagi and arcosol-graves in the Catacombs were regularly used during the persecutions as Mass-tables is maintained by d'Agincourt (*op. cit.* i. p. 144), de Rossi (quoted by Wieland, *Mensa und Confessio*, p. 6), Caumont (*Abécédaire*, p. 7), Kraus (*Roma sotterranea*, pp. 585-586, and *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, i. p. 260), A. Schmid (in Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, i. 35), Aspelin (*Siipialttarit*, p. 2), Hildebrand (*Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. pp. 253 and 607), and by most of the popular writers. In historical novels underground services at the so-called grave-altars have often been described: cf. Chateaubriand, *Les Martyrs*, pp. 91 and 238; Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 133; Newman, *Callista*, p. 261.

3. Wieland, *op. cit.* p. 72; Kauffmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, pp. 120, 142 *seq.*; Richter, *op. cit.* pp. 4-9; Holtzinger, *op. cit.* pp. 229, 237; Nikolaus Müller, *Koimeterien* (in Herzog-Hauck, *Realencyklopädie*, x. p. 836). The three last-named authors maintain that the grave-chapels were used at memorial festivals and death-meals, but that regular services were never celebrated in them.

4. Cf. *e.g.* the general view of the theories of the origin of the Basilica given by Kaufmann, *op. cit.* pp. 145 *seq.*

5. Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, cap. x.

6. The stone altars, supported by independent legs, seem to have been still erected in French churches during the later Middle Age. Cf. Caumont, *Abécédaire*, pp. 528-529, 682; Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, vol. ii. art. "L'Autel"; Enlart, *Manuel d'archéologie*, i. pp. 732-733.

Cf. also Otte, *Handbuch der kirchlichen Kunstarchäologie*, i. p. 99, on altar tables resting on columns in German churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This type has perhaps been borrowed by Crusaders from the Oriental Church, where it survived till our own day.

For detailed information about the earliest altars, see Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, i. pp. 47 *seq.*; Laib und Schwarz, *Studien über die Geschichte des christlichen Altars*, pp. 10-12, 17; Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, pp. 187, 198-252; Atchley, *Ordo Romanus primus*, p. 19.

7. Cf. *e.g.* the cupola mosaic in S. Giovanni in Fonte, at Ravenna.

8. Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 119.

9. The statement that the Christian communities were legalised as burial colleges, in order that they might under this name possess land and common buildings, seems to have been first made by de Rossi. This view has been adopted by a great number of investigators (cf. *e.g.* Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, i. p. 37, and *Roma sotterranea*, p. 97; Kaufmann, *op. cit.* p. 143; Dietrichson, *Den kirkelige Kunstarkaeologi*, pp. 15, 58). But there are also authors who think the theory unproved (cf. Sybel, *Christliche Antike*, i.

p. 121). It is not within our competence to express any opinion upon this juridical question. The only thing to be borne in mind is that the Christians, even if this was not based on any legal ordinance, felt relatively secure at the places where the dead were buried. According to Renan, it was only during the worst persecutions, under Valerianus and Maximianus, that the right of the Christians to dispose of their graves was not recognised (Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 539). As is well known, during the reign of Valerianus, Sixtus II. was attacked and executed "in coemeterio." When, during the worst persecutions, respect for the abodes of the dead had once been weakened, the Christians were, as Wieland rightly states, more exposed at the burial-places than anywhere else (Wieland, *Mensa und Confessio*, p. 91). But the very fact that it was known they could be found there shows that these places had earlier been used as places of assembly.

10. Richter, *Der Ursprung der abendländischen Kirchengebäude*, p. 21; Wieland, *op. cit.* pp. 76-81 and 91. The latter author, like many modern investigators, considers that memorial festivals were celebrated in these over-ground chapels, but not any regular service.

11. Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, i. pp. 261-265; Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, p. 145.

12. Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, pp. 5-6; Enlart in Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, I. i. p. 97 (on French churches outside the town walls).

13. Cf. Hermas, *Pastor*, cap. 16. (On how the heathen descend to baptism as [spiritually] dead, but ascend from it alive. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 472.) The octagonal form of the earliest fonts was interpreted already by the old Fathers of the Church with symbolical reference to the round or octagonal grave monuments (Holtzinger, *op. cit.* p. 213; Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 17; Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 284; Dietrichson, *Den kirkelige Kunstarkaeologi*, p. 23). An expression of the same association of ideas may be seen in the fact that romanesque fonts were often adorned with reliefs representing Christ's death and resurrection (Bergner, *Handbuch der kirchlichen Kunstalterthümer*, p. 276).

As Barfoed points out (*op. cit.* p. 284), the grave-symbolism loses its application to baptism as soon as immersion in the font began to be replaced by a sprinkling of the head.

14. Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 135; Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, p. 25. Walter Pater, in his historical novel *Marius the Epicurean*, has more beautifully and clearly than any one else described the influence of the Christian doctrine of immortality upon the cult of the dead.

15. Kraus, *Roma sotterranea*, p. 109; Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 305; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 524-525.

16. Augustinus, *Confessiones*, vi. cap. 2.

17. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 71, 283, and 309.

Probably the oldest mention of these festivals is to be found in the narrative of Polycarp's martyrdom (about the middle of the second century): "And so we afterwards took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter."—Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 196 (text) and 209 (English translation).

A description of the Christian cult of the dead, romanticised but based on careful study, is to be found in Walter Pater's novel, *Marius the Epicurean*, ii. p. 103.

For the heathen memorial festivals on the death-days of the deceased, and for the meals laid upon the grave, cf. the rich collection of facts given by Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 18-19, 22, 291 *seq.*; Schultze, *op. cit.* p. 135; N. Müller, *Koimeterien*, in Herzog-Hauck's *Realencyklopädie*, x. p. 833; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 33 ("The Emperor always keeps the philosophers' graves adorned with flowers, and offers sacrifices on their death-days").

18. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 27 and 29, cites utterances of Cyprian, Eusebius, and Ambrosius upon the Mass-cult performed at funerals, at which the souls of the dead were thought to partake of the blessing of the mystical sacrifice. For the Mass at memorial festivals, cf. *ibid.* pp. 71, 76, 318; Wieland, *Mensa und Confessio*, pp. 59 and 62.

19. Schultze, *op. cit.* p. 139; cf., however, Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, p. 237.

20. Schultze, *op. cit.* pp. 155 *seq.*, on martyr graves and memorial chapels erected over the graves.

21. Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, xi. vv. 153 *seq.* These verses are cited and utilised by Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, vol. i. p. 41. Kraus considers himself justified, by reason of Prudentius's poem, in supposing that even during the persecutions grave-masses were celebrated in the Catacombs. Schultze, peculiarly enough, has paid no attention to the description of Hippolytus's grave-altar.

An ordinance in Felix I.'s Pope-book, according to which masses should be celebrated over the graves of martyrs, has been often quoted. Cf. *e.g.* Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 23; Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, i. p. 39; Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, p. 179. It should be remembered, however, that the earliest edition of the *Liber pontificalis* was written only in the time of Felix IV. Cf. Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, p. 120; Wieland, *Mensa und Confessio*, p. 148.

Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. pp. 10-12, describes old Anglo-Saxon memorial festivals, at which Mass was celebrated at temporary tables erected over the actual saint-graves.

22. Otte, *Handbuch*, i. pp. 40-42; Holtzinger, *op. cit.* p. 121; Kaufmann, *op. cit.* p. 179.

23. Cf. Auber, *Histoire du symbolisme*, ii. pp. 179-180; Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 331. It may here be left unsettled whether the apocalyptic vision was a model for the old Christian cult arrangements, or if the reverse was the case. For an interpretation of the passage, see Koestlin, *Geschichte des christlichen Gottesdienstes*, p. 6. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 517, emphatically maintains the influence of the Book of Revelation on Christian Liturgy. Wieland (*Mensa und Confessio*, p. 45) considers that the vision refers to the Jewish altar, at the foot of which the blood of the sacrificial animal, which corresponds to the souls of the martyrs, was poured out. In his opinion the revelation has had no importance for the development of the Christian cult.

24. For the influence of the heathen "cippa" on the forms and decoration of the *confessio*, cf. Holtzinger, *Die altchristliche Architektur*, pp. 130-131.

25. *Ibid.* pp. 122-133.

26. The legend of Saint Varus offers a typical example of the transference of a saint's body from the grave to the altar (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, xii. p. 484; *Acta Sanctorum*, October 19, lvii. pp. 432-433).

27. Schultze, *op. cit.* pp. 119-120.

28. As early as at the second Council of Nicaea it was ordained that every altar should enclose some relics. According to Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, p. 278, this order did not create any new custom, but only established a usage already time-honoured. For historical information as to the age of the usage and its introduction into northern communities, see Rock, *Hierurgia*, ii. pp. 17-24; Frere, *Pontifical Services*, i. p. 2, and *Religious Ceremonial*, pp. 84-85; Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. pp. 254-255. Scholastic and symbolical interpretations of the significance of relics are set forth, among others, by Honorius Augustodunensis (*Sacramentarium*, cap. 102. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. clxxii. col. 806, and *Gemma animae*, lib. i. cap. 134. *Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 586).

29. Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, p. 54 (Ordo Romanus and Ordo Ambrosianus. The Gallic and Mozarabic liturgies contain in this passage no reference to the relics).

30. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, pp. 23-25; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, ii. pp. 1 *seq.*; Holtzinger, *op. cit.* pp. 133-146; Atchley, *Ordo Romanus primus*, p. 20. For the comparatively rare "ciborium" altars in German churches, see Otte, *Handbuch*, i. pp. 102-105; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 269.

31. Cf. the facts about German "ciborium" buildings adduced by Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp*, pp. 97-98.

32. Holtzinger, *op. cit.* p. 243.

33. *Ibid.* pp. 243 *seq.* 134; Schultze, *Archäologie*, pp. 121 *seq.* In explaining the origin of the "ciborium" Schultze refers not only to the grave-buildings, but also to the little "aedicula," which in heathen temples was often erected above the images of the gods.

34. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 15; Binterim, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iv. i. pp. 104-107; Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, i. pp. 194 *sq.*; Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, pp. 45-46; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, v. pp. 24-25; Atz, *Die christliche Kunst*, pp. 17-18; Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. p. 310; together with the frequently cited works of Kraus, Bergner, and Otte.

CHAPTER III

1. The relationship between saint-miracles and relic-miracles should not, however, be interpreted as supplying any ratio between the miraculous power of the living men and of the remains of the dead. There are many saints whose posthumous deeds are far more noteworthy than the miracles they performed during their lives. Cf. Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, p. 174.

2. Cf. Maury, *Croyances et légendes du moyen âge*, pp. 116 *seq.*

3. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 205-245.

4. Cf. the facts collected by the author in *The Origins of Art*, pp. 278-286, and in *Skildringar ur Pueblofolkens Konstlif*, pp. 109-110.

5. Renan, *Nouvelles Études*, p. 115.

6. Le Braz, *La Terre du passé*, p. 171.

7. Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 36; Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 144-145.

8. Cf. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique*, pp. 191-193.

9. Schultze, *op. cit.* p. 136.

10. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 131, 136, 182.

11. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, i. p. 114.

12. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 273-274. It is an exception from the general rule that is recorded in the legend of St. Wolfgang († 994). When this saint became Bishop of Regensburg he offered the inhabitants the choice between having, after his death, his body or his miracles. People thought they had done good business in asking to have the relics, without which the dead man would not be able to perform any miracles. But Wolfgang, who probably saw through the community's calculations, cheated all expectations. His bones rest at Regensburg, but perform no miracles, while, on the other hand, Wolfgang elsewhere gladly helps those who invoke him (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, xii. p. 732).

13. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 136.

14. *Ibid.* pp. 246 *seq.*

15. Ephraim Syrus, *Carmina Nisibena*, xiii., cited by Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, pp. 98-99.

16. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 404-405. Saint Marcianus († 388) exacted from his disciples the promise that they should bury him secretly, because he was distressed by seeing how, even during his lifetime, chapels were erected in different places to receive his bones (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, xiii. p. 58 (2 Nov.); *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. lxv. p. 541). Cf. the precautions that had to be taken to prevent the dying Saint Francis from being stolen by the inhabitants of Perugia (*Speculum perfectionis*, ed. Sabatier, pp. 44 and 236; Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 261). For the stealing of saints' bones, see Sabatier, *S. François d'Assise*, p. 410.

17. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 191 (citation from Augustine). The outgrowths of the relic-cult were condemned in still stronger terms during the twelfth century by the—for his time—particularly enlightened Abbot Guibert de Nogent-sous-Coucy in his notable work, *De pignoribus sanctorum*, *Patr. Lat.* vol. clvi. (see esp. coll. 621, 623-627); cf. on this author Abel Lefranc's article in *Études d'histoire du moyen âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod.*

18. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 177 *seq.*

19. Richter, *Der Ursprung der abendländischen Kirchengebäude*, p. 41; Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 189.

20. *Ibid.* pp. 195 and 303. These pieces of cloth could, as substitutes for relics, be enclosed in the altar's "sepulchral chamber," Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, i. p. 39.

21. On the preference of parts of the body over articles of clothing, see the utterances of old authors collected by Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 405.

22. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 303 (citation from Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Martyrum*, 28). According to a view worked out during the sixth century, and formulated by Gregory the Great, the pieces of cloth had not absorbed emanations from the martyrs, but had *been transformed* into their bodies. Thus the reasoning which is at the base of the transubstantiation doctrine was applied to the relic-cult. What is external, the accidents, remain unaltered, while the substance undergoes transformation. The truth of this theory was confirmed, it was asserted, by miracles similar to those which are related in the literature about the Mass. Just as there were bleeding Hosts, so also bleeding pieces of cloth were known (Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 195). Those who believed in these miracles could not, if they were consistent, admit that parts of the body had any preference over pieces of clothing; but neither could they, if they upheld the analogy with the eucharistic transubstantiation, have allowed that the pieces of cloth underwent any change in weight.

23. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 386-387, 402.

24. *Ibid.* pp. 298-299; Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. p. 354.

25. *Ibid. op. cit.* p. 168 (citation from Sulpicius Severus); Dobschütz, *Christus-Bilder*, p. 98 (citations from Arculf and Beda).

26. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, p. 285 (citation from Paulinus de Nola, *Epistola XXXI.*). The same passage is introduced by Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 168. Calvin asserts that the fragments of the holy Cross would fill the hold of a ship (*Traicté des reliques, opera vi.* col. 420). Baring Gould says, in opposition to this "ignorant calumny," that the particles in question are often as small as pin's heads and as thin as hairs (*Lives of the Saints*, v. p. 63 (May 3)).

27. Baring Gould, *op. cit.* iii. p. 95 (March 6). Similar stories are related of S. Tyllo (Feb. 9) and S. Abban (Oct. 27). The last-named miracle is explained by Baring Gould as follows: There were originally two saints with the name Abban, who were fused by popular imagination into one person. The legend of a doubling would thus have arisen to justify the appearance of two saint-bodies, which were each authentic remains of a S. Abban. It need not be said that these popular tales were not recognised by learned theologians even during the Middle Ages. Where there was any inclination to criticise, the multitudinous copies of relics of the same saint awoke a lively dissatisfaction. Thus Guibert de Nogent, in terms that recall Calvin's polemic, jokes over the fact that John the Baptist's head was preserved at two different places. "Can one, indeed," he exclaims, "say anything more absurd about so great a man than that he had been provided with two heads" (*De pignoribus sanctorum. Patr. Lat.* vol. clvi. col. 624). The curious correspondence between the writings of the mediaeval author and Calvin's *Traicté des reliques* are set forth by Lefranc, *Études d'histoire du moyen âge*, p. 306.

28. Cf. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 164. The same criticism is applied by enlightened heathen authors to the ancient idols. Strabo, *e.g.*, mocks at the numerous "veritable" *palladia* which were all said to come from Troy (Dobschütz, *Christus-Bilder*, p. 20).

29. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 171.

30. Digby, *Mores catholici*, i. p. 295, reference to Sardagna's *Theologia dogmatica*. S. Carlo Borromeo had eight copies made of the holy nail at Milan. One of these imitations, which was sent to Philip II., is now regarded as an original, and is exhibited as such in the Escorial (Baring Gould, *op. cit.* v. p. 63).

31. Cf. Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, pp. 291-292. In the modern Catholic Church it can still often be observed that pictures of saint-images are thought to receive an increased power through contact. The monks at Ara Coeli in Rome, who distribute to all visitors reproductions of *Il santo bambino*, never omit to rub the small pictures against the wall of the glass case in which the wonder-working Child rests.

32. In our summary of the Veronica legend the differences between the several variants have, for the sake of brevity, been omitted. For a detailed and critical treatment of all the Christian Acheiropoiït legends—Agbar's and Veronica's Christ-pictures, the miraculous impression of the Saviour's form on the pillar at which He was scourged, and on the shroud in which He was laid, the Mary-picture at Dikaspolis and the pictures of S. George—see Dobschütz, *Christus-Bilder* (*passim*). As Dobschütz asserts, p. 269, all these pictures have originated through contact with, *i.e.* through the impression

of the model: "This thought is the natural expression for the Christian Acheiropoiït belief."

The story of Veronica, and kindred legends, is also treated by Hackwood, *Christ Lore*, p. 110; and by Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 460 (rich bibliography).

It is worth mentioning that Agbar's cure corresponded exactly to the treatment that is still practised by the medicine-men of the Navajo Indians, when they let their patients roll over the great pictures made out in sand-mosaic. Cf. Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, p. 292; *Pueblofolkens konstlif*, pp. 109-110.

33. Seuse [=Suso], *Deutsche Schriften*, i. pp. 87-88.

34. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 197. The numerous legends about animated pictures prove that between the saints and their representations there existed a relationship similar to that existing between them and their relics. Cf. the stories of S. Catherine of Alexandria and S. Catherine of Siena, of S. Teresa and of S. Rosa of Lima, etc.

CHAPTER IV

1. Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, p. 140.

2. We deliberately leave out of consideration here the assertion of educated Catholics that in the relics men really worshipped the saint in the same way as God is worshipped in a picture or a symbol (cf. Esser, art. "Reliquien" in Wetzer-Welte, *Kirchenlexikon*). It cannot be doubted that relic worship—for the earlier Christians as for the mass of believers to-day—was based on utilitarian ideas of the help that might be had from the sacred remains.

3. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 298 (utterances of Balæus and Hilarius as to how the demons howl for fear at the graves of martyrs).

4. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae* (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. clxxii. col. 567).

5. Cf. *e.g.* the description of how the faithful strove to touch Polycarp before he was carried to the pyre, Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 207. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 402, introduces several narratives of how the great ascetics during their lives were sought for by fellow-believers, who asked to touch their bodies or apparel.

6. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. pp. 312-319; Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 287 and 299.

7. Delehaye, *Les Légendes hagiographiques*, p. 178 (citation from Gregory of Tours about the altar in St. Peter's, *De gloria martyrum*, 27).

8. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 16 (art. "L'Autel"); Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 98; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 261.

9. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 278.

10. Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 34, 61, and 139.

11. For reliquaries in Swedish churches see Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid.* iii. pp. 607-646.

12. Bergner, *op. cit.* pp. 350, 356.

13. These profane objects of adornment were in many cases presented to the Church (Otte, *op. cit.* p. 158).

14. Cf. note 17 to Chap. II.

15. Cf. Sybel, *Christliche Antike*, ii. pp. 50 *seq.* Clermont Ganneau (*Revue critique*, 1880, No. 47) attempts to derive the form of the Capsa, not from the

Christian sarcophagi, but from the old Jewish bone-chest, the so-called "ossuaria." Cf. Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. p. 476, note 7. Woermann, again, thinks that these relic-shrines may be regarded as "new, refined, and spiritualised editions of the prehistoric funeral urns in the form of buildings" (*Geschichte der Kunst*, ii. p. 243).

16. Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 149-150 (pictures of reliquaries in the form of towers and church-cupolas); Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 353.

17. Enlart in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, xxviii. (art. "Reliquaires"); Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 150-153; Bergner, *op. cit.* pp. 353-355; Meinander, *Altarskåp*, p. 100.

18. Cf. Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, p. 291.

19. Cf. Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 298-299.

20. Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 147; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 356.

21. Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 157; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 356. For Swedish monstrances, Hildebrand, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 691-693.

22. It was imagined that on their feast-days the saints were present in all places where their bones were preserved. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 310 (extracts from Gregory of Nyssa, *De S. Theodoro*, *Patr. Graec.* xlvi. col. 745).

23. A similar function was performed, Hildebrand supposes, by the many window openings in the church of S. Lawrence at Visby, *op. cit.* iii. p. 644.

24. The custom of setting up relics on the altar was legalised by Papal letters and the resolution of a Council during the ninth century. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, pp. 2, 49, 65-66; Münzenberger, *Zur Kenntniss und Würdigung der mittelalterlichen Altäre*, i. p. 19; Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 139.

Durandus, who wrote in the thirteenth century, mentions the custom of placing upon the altar small phylacteries (*i.e.* according to Durandus' terminology, small vessels of costly material) which contained saint-relics (*Rational*, i. p. 54, French transl.). He also says that in some churches saint-relics and consecrated wafers were preserved in a tabernacle placed on the altar. This, in his opinion, is an imitation of the arrangement on the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant (*ibid.* i. p. 35). Where the altar was crowned by a "ciborium" roof, the small reliquaries, like the lamps and wreaths (the so-called "regna," which will be mentioned in Chap. V.), were probably hung by chains from the roof. Cf. Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 176; Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 139.

25. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 37; Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. p. 319.

26. Viollet de Duc, *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, i. p. 70; Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 52; Gaidoz, *Un Vieux Rite médical*, pp. 35-54; Münzenberger, *op. cit.* i. p. 36. Delehaye (*Les Légendes hagiographiques*, p. 177) makes a reservation to Gaidoz's method of comparing the Christian relic-cult with the old magical healing-rites. For the cure in question, cf. Hirn, *op. cit.* pp. 285-286.

27. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 25; Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* pp. 52, and 69; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, ii. p. 43; Dietrichson, *Omrids af den kirkelige Kunstarkaeologi*, p. 94.

28. Rock, *Hierurgia*, ii. pp. 285-287; Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 156; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 355. The relic-plates described in what follows should not be confused with the diptychs in which the saint-calendar was recorded.

29. Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 68; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 264; Enlart in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, xxviii. p. 493.

30. Cf. Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 109, 110, 113; Aspelin, *Siipialttarit*, pp. 17-18, 57-58, 107; Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp*, p. 99; Wallem, *De islandske kirkers udstyr i Middelalderen*, pp. 51-52, 54.

31. According to Meinander's ingenious theory the wings of the altar-cabinet have developed from the velaria round ancient ciboria. Even in this author's opinion, however, both "the architectonic erection and the embellishment with figures were borrowed from reliquaries and retabula," *op. cit.* pp. 97, 103, and 98-102.

CHAPTER V

1. Cf. *e.g.* Leprieur i Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, i. 1. p. 412. Illustrations and descriptions of the most famous of these votive crowns are given also in Parmentier, *Album historique*, i. pp. 34 and 69.

2. 1 Cor. xi. 24-25; Philipp. iii. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7-8; Hebr. xii. 1; 1 Peter v. 4; James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10, iii. 11. Pictorial representations of this idea are often met with in earlier Christian art, *e.g.* in the great nave mosaic in San Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, where the martyrs, men on one side and women on the other, walk in solemn procession towards the choir, each with his crown in his hand. Cf. also the fresco in Domitilla's Catacombs, and the mosaics in S. Cosma e Damiano, in S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, in S. Prassede e Pudenziana (all at Rome), and in S. Giovanni in Fonte at Ravenna. For information about other pictures of martyrs, receiving crowns from Christ or offering them to Him, see Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, pp. 426-427.

3. Barbier de Montault, *Iconographie chrétienne*, i. p. 43.

4. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, v. pp. 101-115.

5. Cf. the utterances about the altar as a place for Christ's body, collected by Rock, *Hierurgia*, ii. pp. 297-298.

6. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, i. p. 35. Auber, *Histoire du symbolisme*, iii. p. 263.

7. Koestlin, *Geschichte des christlichen Gottesdienstes*, pp. 75-76.

8. A picture of this altar (which was originally erected in the church of S. Bartholomew, and is now kept in Das Grosse Garten Museum at Dresden) is given in Bergner's *Handbuch*, p. 262.

9. The comparison between the altar and Christ's grave is often found in mediaeval liturgists. Amalarius of Metz, who lived as early as the ninth century, returns time after time to this thought. Cf. *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *Patr. Lat.* cv. cols. 1144, 1154, 1155; *Eclogae de officio missae*, *Patr. Lat.* cv. cols. 1325-1326 ("Ecce habes hic tumulum Christi quem conspicis aram"). These expressions perhaps refer to the table-surface rather than to the altar-chest. But it is impossible strictly to maintain the distinction between these two parts of the altar.

10. On the Eucharist as the absolute ruler of the altar-table cf. Barthélemy's notes to Durand's *Rational*, i. p. 325.

11. Gezo Abbas Dertonensis, *Liber de corpore et sanguine Christi* (*Patr. Lat.* cxxxvii. col. 402). The same legend is found, quoted from Odo of Cluny, in Viollet le Duc's *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. pp. 16-17.

12. For the consecration of these stone plates and their introduction into the surface of the altar, cf. Atz, *Die christliche Kunst*, pp. 17-18.

13. Hugo de S. Victore [?], *Speculum ecclesiae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxvii. col. 340); Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale*, L. i. caps. 7 and 9 (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. cols.

32 and 35); Durand, *Rational* (French translation), i. p. 117; Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, i. p. 377.

14. Cf. Bion, *Le Monde de l'eucharistie*, p. 9.

15. La Bouillerie, *Symbolisme de la nature*, p. 67.

16. "Ipsum vides, ipsum tangis, ipsum comedis," S. Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homil.* 83 *in Matth.*, quoted by Bion, *op. cit.* p. 35.

17. Innocent III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. cols. 833-834); Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 91). In the Roman Mass-ritual adopted at the Council of Trent, express reference is made to the memorial element in the Mass (Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, i. p. 76).

18. Albertus Magnus, quoted by Koestlin, *Geschichte des christlichen Gottesdienstes*, p. 101; Martinus von Cochem, *Erklärung des heiligen Messopfers*, pp. 5-7, 70-72; Broussolle, *Théoric de la messe*, p. 164.

19. The Roman Mass differs in this respect from the Greek-Catholic altar service, which is so distinctively theatrical in character that some writers have even thought that survivals of the Greek heathen ritual-drama could be traced in it. Cf. Koestlin, *op. cit.* p. 62; Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 361.

20. Cf. Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 39; also Barthélemy in the introduction to Durand's *Rational*, i. p. xxviii.

21. In Isidorus's *De officiis ecclesiasticis* (*Patr. Lat.* lxxxiii. cols. 752 *seq.*), none of the symbolical interpretations, so universal at a later time, are yet introduced. On the other hand, the symbolising element appears in an explanation of the Mass ascribed to Bishop Germanus of Paris (*Expositio brevis liturgiae*, *Patr. Lat.* lxxii. cols. 89-98). This work, however, forms an exception in Western literature of that period. Cf. Franz, *Die Messe*, p. 340. For Amalarius and his Mass-doctrine, see Franz, *op. cit.* pp. 351 *seq.* Amalarius's exposition was opposed by his enemy, the deacon Florus, and at the Synod of Kierzy (838) was declared heretical.

22. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 570). Similar utterances are found in Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. cols. 144-148). Some isolated remarks about divine service as a "theatre" for the pious are to be met with as early as Tertullian (*De spectaculis*, xxix. and xxx.), also in Johannes Damascenus (*Parallel.* iii. 47), quoted in Ancona's *Origini del teatro italiano*, i. pp. 12-14.

23. Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. cols. 144 *seq.*).

24. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 544), "Episcopus de sacrario ornatus procedit, et Christus de utero Virginis decore indutus tamquam sponsus de thalamo procedit." The same thought occurs in Hugo de S. Victore [?], *Speculum ecclesiae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxvii. col. 357); Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 92); Durand, *Rational*, i. p. 27, ii. p. 42. Cf. also Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 213.

25. Durand, *op. cit.* i. p. 215, ii. pp. 21-22, 49-50.

26. Sicardus, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. cols. 144-148).

27. Innocent III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. cols. 815 and 894); Durand, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 101, 310.

28. Sicardus, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. cols. 144 *sqq.*).

29. For a more exact exposition of the mediaeval liturgists' explanation of all these points, see Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, i. pp. 21-22. Cf. also the quotations given by the modern writer Durand (not to be confused with the famous author of the *Rational*), *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, pp. 27, 33, 44, 51, 53-54, 59.

30. Huysmans, *En route*, p. 257. At the French "military masses" the elevation of the Sacrament was still during the last century accompanied by the beating of drums and blowing of trumpets (Broussolle, *Théorie de la messe*, p. 144).

31. Durand, *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, pp. 60 and 65; cf. also Robertus Paululus, *Appendix ad Hugonis de S. Victore opera* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxvii. col. 435).

32. Amalarius, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (*Patr. Lat.* cv. col. 1144). *Eclogae de officio missae* (*ibid.* col. 1327); Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 558); Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 134); Innocent III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 895); Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 366.

33. Cf. besides the authors just quoted, *Speculum Missae*, in "Svenska kyrkobruk," esp. p. 89 (Sv. Fornskr-Sällsk. Saml.); Durand, *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, p. 67; Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, pp. 161-162; Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 376; Sauer, *op. cit.* p. 199.

34. Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 177; Rock, *Hierurgia*, i. pp. 107-108; Durand, *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, p. 21; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, vi. pp. 172-174, 194; Sauer, *op. cit.* p. 201.

35. Guéranger, *L'Année liturgique*, ii. 2, pp. 58 *seq.*; Martinus von Cochem, *Erklärung des heiligen Messopfers*, pp. 54-55.

36. Durand, *Rational*, iv. p. 108; Sauer, *op. cit.* pp. 158 *seq.*

37. Durand, *Rational*, ii. pp. 69-70, 90, 102, 402, 406; Durand, *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, pp. 33, 44, 51, 53. The same thought is expressed by the way in which the deacons walk up to their desks on one side, and down on the other side. Innocent III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 823). For the symbolical ideas connected with the north and south sides of the church, see Gherit van der Goude, *Dat Boexken van der Missen*, p. 29 (Percy Dearmer's explanations).

38. Cf. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, ii. pp. 4 *seq.*

39. Cf. the facts cited by Cohen, *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français*, pp. 19-23. Detailed information and a rich bibliography of the occasional "Easter-graves" are given in Chambers, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 16-20. For completion of these, see Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. p. 76, iv. pp. 277 *seq.*; and Dale, *The Sacristan's Manual*, p. 67. For a Swedish Easter-grave erected during the Middle Ages in the Cathedral at Upsala, see Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. p. 563. For other Swedish Easter-graves, *ibid.* pp. 647, 648.

40. It is not impossible, however, that the simple forms of a dramatic liturgy in many cases survived by the side of the developed dramas (Meyer, Wilhelm, *Fragmenta Burana*, p. 32, in Festschrift d. K. Ges. d. Wissensch. Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Cl. 1901).

41. Best known is the narrative of Brother John, who fell down as though dead after uttering the words of consecration (*Fioretti*, cap. 53). Petrus Celestinus, the unhappy Pope against his own will, had before his elevation felt unworthy of celebrating Mass. Cf. Hello, *Physionomies de saints*, p. 72. S. Filippo Neri, when he stood at the altar, was seized by such devotion that he could with difficulty collect his thoughts for the necessary ceremonies. Jørgensen, *Romerske Helgenbilleder*, pp. 174, 194-195. See also the stories of S. Thomas de Villanova; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, x. p. 343 (Sept. 22).

CHAPTER VI

1. Cf. Witting, *Die Anfänge christlicher Architektur*, pp. 24-25, 29 *seq.*, 48-56, 69-89. Witting's argument should be compared with Zestermann's theory advanced in 1847 (cf. the summary in Otte's *Handbuch*, i. p. 277, and Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, p. 146).

2. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. p. 9.

3. The mystery is so terribly great that a man cannot retain his senses even when trying to explain it. Thus, Innocent III. says, when, in his commentary on the Mass, he begins the chapter on the consecration: "Deficit lingua, sermo disparet, superatur ingenium, opprimitur intellectus," *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 851). This phrase has been transcribed word for word by Durand in his *Rational*, without giving its source (*Rational*, ii. p. 227).

* Among modern writers there is reason to quote Vianey, the pious "curé d'Ars," who absolutely thought that a man could not survive a complete insight into the altar-mystery. "If one knew what the Mass is," he used often to say, "one would die, yes, one would die of love and gratitude" (cf. Durand, *Trésor liturgique des fidèles*, p. 25).

4. Caumont, *Abécédaire*, p. 116; Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 102; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, i. p. 155. Although, as Otte and Kraus assert, during the first centuries the use of chalices made of wood or of clay was permitted, yet it should be stated that even during the primitive period of Christianity a special Church industry had arisen. Cf. Renan, *S. Paul*, p. 266; *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 546. According to modern research the costly gold glasses found in catacombs, and spoken of by earlier authors as liturgical vessels, have nothing to do with the Mass (cf. Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 310). A short history of the ordinances concerning Mass-vessels and Mass-apparel is given by Honorius Augustodunensis in *Gemma animae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 574).

5. For pictures and descriptions of altar-vessels, see Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, iv. pp. 46-47, 75, 102, 125; also the often-quoted handbooks of Otte, Kraus, and Bergner. Cf. also Tikkanen, *Nattvardskalken i Borgå domkyrka*, in *Ateneum*, i. 1902; also, with reference to the same gem of the goldsmith's art, Aspelin, *Suomalaisen taiteen historia*, p. 23. For Swedish chalices cf. Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. pp. 649-667.

6. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, p. 58; Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 102-103. Otte quotes some verses from the younger Titurel:

> Sammet der grüne gewebete, geschnitten über Ringe,
> Ob jeden Altar schwebte für den Staub."

We transcribe the following note from Meinander's *Medeltida altarskåp*, p. 93: Cf. Bishop Hemming's statutes of the year 1352: "Tertius quod in Ecclesiis testitudinatis pannus unus seu vestis inter altare et testudinem superius extendatur, propter immunditias removendas." Porthan, *Opera selecta*, i. p. 248.

7. Atz, *Die christliche Kunst*, p. 14.

8. Cf. Dale, *The Sacristan's Manual*, pp. vi-viii.

9. *Acta Sanctorum*, xliv. p. 42; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, x. p. 182 (Sept. 12).

10. *Speculum perfectionis*, ed. Sabatier, pp. 102 and 105; Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 376.

11. *Ibid.* pp. 118 *seq.*; Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, pp. 220-221.

12. Fornici, *Institutions liturgiques*, p. 41; Amalarius, *Regula canonicorum collecta* (*Patr. Lat.* cv. col. 881; references to Sixtus's Pontifical Book and the Council of Laodicea). For further references, and for ethnological parallels to the exclusion of women from holy places, see Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. pp. 664-666.

13. Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 178.

14. Sabatier, *Vie de S. François d'Assise*, p. 180 (reference to *Acta Sanctorum*); Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 106.

15. Cf. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, ii. p. 21. As regards the form of the altar, people were guilty of great offences against the strict principles of style, especially during the rococo period.

16. Concerning flowers on the altar-table, cf. Binterim, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iv. pp. 1 *seq.*; Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, pp. 45 and 77; *Essays on Ceremonial by Various Authors*, pp. 67, 103 *seq.* (Legg, *On some Ancient Liturgical Customs*).

17. It is significant that, according to the modern Church usage, the relics are removed from the altar at the times when the Sacrament is exposed (Esser, "Reliquien" in Wetzer-Welte's *Kirchenlexikon*, xi. p. 1040).

18. Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 177; Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 168.

19. For the embellishment of the gospel-books, cf. the rich information collected by Sauer, *op. cit.* p. 178.

20. The Catholic doctrine of symbols, according to which the different stones represented definite Christian virtues or holy persons, probably had its influence on the use of crystals and diamonds in the Church's art. Cf. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. pp. 220-222; La Bouillerie, *Symbolisme de la nature*, i. pp. 185-218; Otte, *op. cit.* ii. p. 869; Huysmans, *Là-bas*, p. 422 (citation from Giambattista Porta).

21. The candle-sticks were probably stationed, until the fourteenth century, on the floor in front of the altar. Only from the beginning of this century did they get a place on the Mass-table itself. Cf. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, p. 62; Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. p. 555. On the symbolism of the candelabra, see Innocent III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 811); Durand, *Rational*, i. p. 54; Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i. p. 117; Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 177. According to Bergner (*Handbuch*, p. 338), the candles were placed on the altar to commemorate the fact that it was night when the holy meal was instituted. Such an interpretation, which would harmonise well with the old painters' way of indicating the time of the holy mystery at Bethlehem by means of a lighted candle, does not find much support in the writings of the earlier authors. From the extracts from Patristic literature given in Barthélemy's notes to Durand (*Rational*, ii. pp. 442-446), the lighted candles seem usually to have been interpreted as signs of joy at the divine light. It is said that there was a precedent for the custom in Jewish ritual. Finally, it should be mentioned that the light itself, in Catholic symbolism, represents Christ (Durand, *op. cit.* i. p. 28, iv. pp. 418-430; cf. the explanations of the ritual at Baptism, Candlemas, and Easter, given in Dom Guéranger's *L'Année liturgique*, and in Sauer, *op. cit.* pp. 181-191).

22. Rupertus Tuitiensis, *De divinis officiis* (*Patr. Lat.* clxx. col. 171). Cf. for the purity of the wax Ivo Carnotensis (Yves de Chartres), *Sermones* (*Patr. Lat.* clxii. col. 576). Other examples are mentioned by Sauer, *op. cit.* p. 187.

23. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. p. 157.

24. *Ibid.* i. pp. 143-151, 159-171, 219; ii. p. 118; iii. pp. 13, 257; Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 1130).

25. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. pp. 112, 118-19; Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, col. 1130, "unde a pessimis non pejoratur, et ab optimis non melioratur; sicut solis radius a coeno cloacae non sordidatur, nec a sanctuario splendificatur." This passage is transcribed word for word, without citing the source, by Durand (*Rational*, ii. p. 266). The same idea is expressed in "Freidanks Bescheidenheit":

> "Was der Priester mag begehen,
> Der Messe Reinheit bleibt bestehen;
> Man kann in keinen Sachen
> Sie schwächen oder besser machen;
> Die Messe und der Sonne Schein
> Bleiben immer licht und rein."
>
> Quoted according to FRANZ, *Die Messe*, p. 295.

26. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, ii. pp. 101-104; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, viii. pp. 167-173; Otte, *Handbuch*, i. pp. 252-253; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, i. p. 522; ii. p. 502; Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, p. 667. The liturgic combs seem to have survived on Iceland to the later Middle Age (cf. Wallem, *De islandske kirkers udstyr*, p. 87).

27. Rock, *op. cit.* iv. pp. 229-234; Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* vi. p. 125; Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, i. pp. 529-531; Durand, according to his wont, tries to read a deeper meaning into the waving of the fan. This custom, he says, symbolises the priest's devotion, at which the "flabellum" of the spirit drives away all unclean thoughts that, like flies, can pollute his pious mind (*Rational*, ii. p. 224). For representations of flabella see Sommerard, *Les Arts au moyen âge; Atlas*, ch. xiv. pl. iv., and *Album*, 9e série, p. xvii.

That there was real occasion to protect the Sacrament from the proximity of insects appears from that chapter in Bishop Anno's biography which relates how a fly, to the horror of the holy man, snapped up a portion of the Host, which, however, at Anno's earnest prayers, the creature brought back again (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, xv. p. 46).

According to the selections from ancient patristic literature made by Raible, *Der Tabernakel*, p. 26, even during the first centuries care was taken to shield the Sacrament carefully from the proximity of insects.

28. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, pp. 514 *seq.*; Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* pp. 35-47; Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, ii. pp. 194-196. For symbolical interpretations of the purpose of maniples see Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 78); Innocentius III., *De sacro altaris mysterio* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 796); Durand, *Rational*, i. pp. 235-238, 268, 434-435.

29. According to Durand, *op. cit.* i. p. 238, the maniples also could be used to cover the hands, "out of respect for the holy objects." For the hand veils cf. Kraus, *Realencyklopädie*, ii. p. 105; Atchley, *Ordo Romanus primus*, p. 30; and the art. "English Ceremonial" in *Essays on Ceremonial*, p. 9; Matthews, *The Mass and its Folklore*, p. 86 (citation from Pellicia as to how the faithful during the first centuries brought their gifts of Mass-bread to the altar in white linen cloths).

30. Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 471; Rydbeck, *Medeltida kalkmålningar i Skånes kyrkor*, p. 23 (triumphal arch in Vinslöf church).

31. Cf. the mosaics in S. Cosma e Damiano, S. Praxede, and S. Maria in

Domnica—all at Rome. Representations, *e.g.* in Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, i. 1. pp. 71, 81, 83.

32. Cf. *e.g.* the mediaeval and early Renaissance pictures reproduced in Venturi, *La Madone*, pp. 274-276, 279, 286; Reinach, *Répertoire de peintures*, i. pp. 368, 369, 371, 372; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende dorée*, pp. 27 and 51; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 482.

33. Garrucci, *Storia della arte cristiana*, v. tav. 346-349. Quotation in Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, p. 505.

34. Kaufmann, *op. cit.* p. 342. Veiled hands are met with also in some representations of the worship of the Magi, and of the angels who receive Mary's soul (Venturi, *op. cit.* pp. 254, 388, and 402). In a picture of the Flight into Egypt in Basilius's *Menologium*, we see a woman who hastens forward, with her hands wrapped in a covering, to meet Mary and the Child (illustration in Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. p. 223).

35. For illustration and description of this composition cf. *e.g.* Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 367. It does not appear probable, however, that the hand veil was at any time obligatory for all communicants. Thus, in the above-mentioned picture in the Codex Rossanensis a disciple appears, stretching out his bare hands to a bowl for bread. The Host is similarly received by an Apostle in the Communion picture in the S. Gallen Antiphonar (illustration in Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 495). These representations correspond closely to an ordinance in Cyril's catechism, dating from the fourth century (see Raible, *Der Tabernakel*, p. 27). For practical reasons it was more advantageous to use the hand veils in touching the holy vessels than in receiving the Host. That laymen were earlier allowed to touch the eucharistic God appears from a resolution of the Council of Auxerre in the middle of the fifth century, according to which the women, but the women only, were forbidden to receive the Sacrament with bare hands (cf. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. p. 666). The later liturgical development has made all such statutes superfluous. At the modern Catholic communion, as is well known, the wafer is placed by the priest in the communicant's mouth.

36. Anrich, *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum*, pp. 222 *seq.*

37. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, cap. 143 (*Patr. Graeca*, xxxiv. col. 1246), quoted by Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, p. 359.

38. Schultze, *Archäologie*, p. 126, resolutions of several Councils set forth. For the more liberal ordinances of later periods see Dale, *The Sacristan's Manual*, p. vi; cf. also Ivo Carnotensis (Yves de Chartres), *Sermones* (*Patr. Lat.* clxii. col. 515).

39. Barbier de Montault, *Le Costume et les usages ecclésiastiques*, i. pp. 151-156.

40. For the washing of hands before Mass cf. Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, i. p. 114; Fornici, *Institutions liturgiques*, p. 83; Rock, *Hierurgia*, i. p. 114. It should not be concealed that the washing was interpreted by the mediaeval ritualists as a symbolic act, referring to the purification of the soul. Cf. Amalarius, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (*Patr. Lat.* cv. col. 1143); Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 558 and 587) and *Sacramentarium* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 794); Durand, *Rational*, i. p. 27; ii. p. 174; cf. also Koestlin, *Geschichte des christlichen Gottesdienstes*, p. 55, on the formulae of the apostolic constitutions for προσφορά. (A server brings the priest water, with which he rinses his hands to symbolise the purity of the souls dedicated to God.)

41. Reproductions of these implements in Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. pp. 537-539.

42. Durand, *Rational*, ii. pp. 298-299; Martène, *De antiquis ecclesiae ritibus*, i. pp. 653-673. It is asserted, however, by ecclesiastical writers that the eucharistic God could not suffer any detriment from being thus wasted. Cf. Guibertus de Novigento (Guibert de Nogent), *De pignoribus Sanctorum* (*Patr. Lat.* clvi. cols. 635-643); Durand, *op. cit.* ii. p. 279. Just as the Mass was not profaned if celebrated by an unworthy priest, so the body of the Highest was not exposed to any danger from an unworthy handling. It was, we imagine, primarily for their own sakes that men were expected to observe an outer reverence and respect with regard to the Holy of holies.

43. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, i. pp. 128-132; Kraus, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Kunst*, ii. 1, p. 474; Bergner, *Handbuch*, pp. 320-321. When the communicants drank out of a chalice, they were often offered, after the communion, water "ad purificationem oris."

Fear of wasting the wine seems also to have influenced the directions as to the material of chalices. Thus we read in Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 55), "Debet esse calix . . . non de vitro, quia cum sit frangibile, effusionis periculum immineret; non de ligno, quoniam cum sit porosum corpus, et spongiosum, sanguinem absorberet." Cf. note 4 in the foregoing. The same idea is expressed by Durand, *Rational*, i. pp. 62-63.

44. Durand, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 519-520 (Barthélemy's notes); Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 94.

45. It is significant that the priests on board vessels celebrate a "missa sicca," *i.e.* an altar-service without the consecration and communion, for it is feared that the sea will cause the wine to be spilled out of the chalice (Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 13; Benedictus XIV., *Commentarii*, p. 177).

46. Durand, *op. cit.* ii. p. 400.

47. Frere, *Religious Ceremonial*, p. iii (quotation from "Use of Sarum"); Benedictus XIV., *Commentarii*, p. 108. Even into this simple gesture Durand seeks to read a symbolic meaning (*Rational*, ii. p. 311).

The danger of the crumbling of the Host was naturally all the greater at the time when soft bread was generally used at Mass. It is probable that the stiff wafers were introduced because they could more easily be broken without any part of the Host being wasted.

48. Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, iv. p. 19 (April 7).

49. Over this basin were also burned pieces of cloth that had been stained by the sacred blood. Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. p. 535, gives some notable extracts on this point from Archbishop Nils Ragnvaldsson's collection of Church ordinances. These ordinances closely correspond with the prescriptions in Durand's book (cf. *Rational*, ii. p. 296).

50. Didron, quoted by Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, iii. p. 143. For the double washing-stands cf. Caumont, *Abécédaire*, pp. 303 and 619; Enlart, *Manuel d'archéologie*, i. p. 750. For the pipes from the washing-basin see Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, iii. pp. 311-312. It is worth mentioning that in Catholic churches other pipes were sometimes introduced to carry the baptismal water from the font to the consecrated ground underneath the church. In the Greek Church the baptismal water was regularly poured out in the churchyard (Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, pp. 276 and 384).

51. Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, i. p. 106 (Ordo Romanus XXVIII. "abluit digitos, extergit et sumit ablutionem"); Schneider, *Manuale sacerdotum*, p. 355.

According to Barthélemy's notes to Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 403, the drinking of the washing water was ordained as early as 1212 by Innocentius III., *i.e.* fifteen or sixteen years after Innocentius wrote the earlier mentioned treatise on the Mass-ritual. The custom had then already existed in some monastic orders. This custom naturally caused the double washing-basins to be regarded as superfluous (cf. also Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 138).

52. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, iii. p. 143.

53. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire de l'architecture*, vii. p. 198.

54. A brilliant and apt, if too subtle a commentary on this work of sculpture is given by Vernon Lee in her essay, "Art and Usefulness," *Contemporary Review*, 1901, pp. 368-370.

CHAPTER VII

1. Cf. Thomas Aquinas's sequence :—

. . . .
Caro cibus, sanguis potus ;
Manet tamen Christus totus
Sub utraque specie.

2. The older Lutherans were, as appeared in the famous dispute in Sweden in the sixteenth century, as rigorous in this respect as the Catholics. See Schück, *Svensk literaturhistoria*, i. pp. 253-254.

3. During early Christian times the communicants brought the Communion bread with them to the churches. For the care with which this bread was prepared in their homes, see Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, iv. p. 385. For the strict demands made during the Middle Ages with regard to the quality of the bread, see Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 293.

4. Daniel, *op. cit.* iv. p. 385. Summary of the same text, Durand, *op. cit.* ii. p. 488 (Barthélemy's notes) ; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, iv. pp. 38-39 ; Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 378 ; and Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, pp. 287-288. For further information about the preparation of wafers see Martène, *De antiquis ecclesiae ritibus*, i. pp. 315-320 ; Durand, *op. cit.* ii. p. 22 ; and Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, i. p. 124 (Anglo-Saxon and the early English ordinances concerning the sacred baking).

5. Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 177.

6. *Speculum perfectionis*, ed. Sabatier, p. 120. In a note Sabatier has collected a number of examples of that worship of the Host which in the case of S. Francis was—the expression is by no means too strong—"l'âme de sa piété."

For a description and reproduction of one of S. Francis's wafer-moulds, preserved at Greccio, see Jørgensen, *Pilgrimsbogen*, pp. 78 *sq.* Cf. also Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 23.

7. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, p. 26, quotation from Johannes Chrysostomus ; Raible, *Der Tabernakel*, p. 39 ; Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 245. For a discussion of the ancient statements that the altar was hidden during the consecration, see Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* pp. 25-26 ; Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 259 ; Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* i. p. 54 ; Frere, *Principles of Religious Ceremonial*, pp. 69, 88-89, 285 ; Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 172.

One may suppose that the concealing of the act of consecration had its basis to some extent in the same fear that led the priest to utter the words of con-

secration in a low tone. For it was thought that laymen also, by imitating the ritual, could perform the eucharistic miracle, and thus transform ordinary bread into God's body. Those who ventured on so heathen an imitation of the holy action were severely punished for their audacity. Cf. the anecdotes recorded in Barthélemy's notes to Durand, *Rational*, ii. pp. 499-501, and in Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, pp. 65 *seq.* (quotation from Moschus's *Pratum spirituale*). For chronological information as to the development of the custom of reading parts of the canon with inaudible voice, see Frere, *op. cit.* p. 287.

Whatever may have been the motive for the introduction of the altar-curtains, this arrangement must have powerfully emphasised the miraculousness and mysteriousness of the transformation.

8. Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, p. 23.

9. Binterim, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, ii. 2, pp. 148 and 172; Caumont, *Abécédaire*, pp. 573-574; Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, i. p. 251; Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* pp. 27 *seq.*; Otte, *op. cit.* pp. 179 *seq.*; Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* v. p. 78; Kraus, *Gesch. d. christl. Kunst*, ii. pp. 465-466; Sommerard, *Les Arts au moyen âge*; Atlas, ch. xiv. pl. iii.

10. Barfoed, *Oldkirkens liturgier*, p. 33.

11. Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire du mobilier*, i. p. 253.

12. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iv. p. 304.

13. Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, p. 266 (description of the monastic church at Solesmes). In the Cathedral of Amiens, in accordance with a tradition five hundred years old, the Sacrament is still exhibited in a dove that hangs above the altar. Raible, *Der Tabernakel*, pp. 148 *seq.*

14. Hope, *English Altars from Illuminated Manuscripts*, pls. x.-xi.

15. Gherit van der Goude, *Dat Boexken van der Missen*, ed. Dearmer, p. 60 (reference to the resolution of the Council of Soissons in 1404 as to the erection of screens around the altar, that the priest may not be disturbed by the onlookers); Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 57.

16. The circumstance that it was only by hearing, *i.e.* by perceiving the priest's words, that it was known that God had concealed Himself in the wafer, gave rise to a curious symbolisation among the mediaeval interpreters of the Mass. A reference to the altar-miracle was found in the Mosaic narrative of Isaac, who blessed Jacob instead of Esau. The old man, it is said, was deceived by his eyes, for he did not recognise the disguised impostor, and he was deceived by his sense of smell, which told him the scent of Esau's clothes. Even his touch failed him, when he thought he was touching Esau's rough hands; but his hearing did not lead him astray when he said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob." In the same way the pious ought to rely only on their ears, and when they hear the priest's words, think with all their might that the bread is God's body. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 931 ("Legendae a quibusdam aliis superadditae"); Broussolle, *Théorie de la messe*, p. 48.

17. Thomas Aquinas, *Lauda Sion* and *Pange lingua*.

18. In some mediaeval churches the eucharistic dove was connected by a chain with a bell on the outer wall of the church, which rang every time the Host-shrine ascended or descended above the altar. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iv. pp. 240-241. As earlier mentioned, the elevation of the Sacrament was in some places accompanied by a ringing in the bell-towers (cf. Chap. V.). During the days of sorrow before Easter the Mass-bells are replaced by wooden rattles or by hammers that are struck upon a board. For symbolical interpretations of these signals cf. Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, pp. 151-152.

19. Schneider, *Manuale sacerdotum*, p. 346.

20. Exodus xxviii. 33-35. Cf. Dietrichson, *Kirkelig Kunstarkaeologi*, p. 125. As corresponding to these sacred sound-signals, we might quote the handbells of the Egyptian priests of Osiris, the Roman "tintinnabula," and the small bells with which the Brahmans at their services invoke the god's attention.

21. For the development of the elevation ceremony see Benedictus XIV., *De sacrificio missae*, p. 103; Rock, *Hierurgia*, i. pp. 132-133; Frere, *Religious Ceremonial*, pp. 94-95, 135; Legg, *Ecclesiological Essays*, p. 43.

22. Martin von Cochem, *Erklärung des heiligen Messopfers*, p. 190.

23. For the influence of the elevation-ceremony upon the mind of the faithful cf. *e.g.* Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 45, and Guéranger, *L'Année liturgique*, iii. p. 40. A noteworthy description of the exhibition of the Host is to be found in Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, pp. 187-189. The author of this description, a fictitious German painter of the time of Albrecht Dürer, receives so powerful an impression from the holy rite that he instantaneously becomes a Catholic.

Franz, *Die Messe*, pp. 22-23, mentions some characteristic ordinances, dating from the end of the fourteenth century, as to the devotion with which the elevated Host ought to be regarded. Special prayers were recommended—or rather short pious invocations—to be said at the moment (*The Lay Folks Mass Book*, pp. 40 *seq.*, 285 *seq.*, 367 *seq.*). In Hope's *English Altars from Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. v., an interesting manuscript illustration is given, representing Edward the Confessor and his suite doing homage with reverential gestures to the uplifted Host.

24. Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, ix. p. 303.

25. We have not succeeded in finding this miracle in any of the old biographies of the Jesuit General. The legend is probably derived from the imagination of modern devotional writers.

26. Bion, *Le Monde de l'eucharistie*, p. 101.

27. Cf. the narratives in regard to Germaine Cousin (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, vi. p. 216) and S. Maria Francesca (Shapcote, *Legends of the Sacrament*, p. 146).

28. Bion, *op. cit.* p. 102.

29. *Ibid.* p. 101. A similar miracle is told of Maurice de Sully, who was Bishop of Paris during the twelfth century (Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 269).

30. Shapcote, *op. cit.* pp. 105-106; Huysmans, *En route*, p. 328.

31. Cf. the stories as to the increased power of the senses in the saints, given by Ribet, *Mystique divine*, ii. pp. 560-570. It is said of Anna Katharina Emmerich that she was able to distinguish consecrated and unconsecrated objects, that she felt herself "magnetically attracted" to relics, and that she could decide from which saints various fragments of bone had come (Clemens Brentano in his introduction to A. K. Emmerich's *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn*, p. 5). Similar stories are told of Sibyllina of Pavia, Ida of Louvain, and Louise Lateau (Huysmans, *En route*, p. 209).

32. Cf. Sabatier, *S. François d'Assise*, p. lxxxvii (reference to an anecdote in Bonaventura's *Vita*, which is not related in the earlier biographies of S. Francis.)

33. Cf. the miracles related in Mussafia, *Marienlegenden*, i. pp. 17-18, 20; ii. p. 59, pp. 20 and 43.

34. Broussolle, *Le Christ de la légende dorée*, p. 223 (reference to a fresco in S. Giovanni-in-Argentella). In Jacobus de Voragine's story of the meeting of

Bernard and the Duke of Aquitaine no mention is made of the latter's horse (cf. *Legenda aurea*, p. 536). Similarly this miracle is unknown to Ernaldus Bonevallensis, who in his life of Bernard gives a detailed description of his strife with Duke William (*Bernardi Vita* in *Patr. Lat.* clxxxv. col. 290; see also *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, pp. 785-786).

35. *Liber miraculorum S. Antonii de Padua* in *Acta sanctorum*, xxiii. p. 217; Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 223.

The most notable representations of this legend are Donatello's relief in Il Santo at Padua, a painting by Campagnola in the same church, a miniature in the Codex Grimani at Venice, and an altar-piece by Van Dyck at Malines.

36. Bion, *op. cit.* p. 72.

37. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iii. p. 203.

38. Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, iii. p. 299.

39. To this group of legends may be referred the story of the converted Jew, who saw how the Saviour bled in the priest's hands when the latter broke the bread at the altar (Gezo, *De corpore Christi* in *Patr. Lat.* vol. cxxxvii. coll. 393-395).

40. Broussolle, *Le Christ de la légende dorée*, p. 222.

41. Johannes Magnus, *Swea och Götha Crönika*, p. 498. This description is quoted by Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, ii. pp. 10-11.

42. *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. viii. pp. 133-134; Gezo, *De corpore Christi*, in *Patr. Lat.* vol. cxxxvii. col. 395; Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, pp. 197-198; *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, p. 717.

43. Weigel und Zestermann, *Die Anfänge der Druckerkunst*, i. p. 155; Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, ii. p. 457. In Weigel's work a large number of old wood-engravings representing the Gregorian Mass are described and reproduced. The motive seems often to have been used in letters of indulgence.

44. For the iconography of the Mass of Gregory cf. Bergner, *Handbuch*, pp. 546-547. For reproductions of northern altar-pieces see Hildebrand, *Sveriges Medeltid*, p. 284, and *Den kyrkliga konsten*, p. 96; *Altertavler i Danmark*, pls. vi., xiv., and lxii., text pp. 32, 159-160. According to an hypothesis advanced by Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, p. 92, the legend that Christ Himself appeared to Gregory had its origin as an interpretation of a Byzantine devotional picture, preserved in the Church of the Holy Cross at Rome.

45. As further examples of anthropomorphic visions in the Host might be quoted the stories told of S. Teresa (Graham, *Santa Teresa*, p. 173); of S. Hugh of Lincoln and of S. Waltheof (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, xiv. p. 400, and ix. p. 30); and of B. Maria Colet (Martin Cochem, *Messerklärung*, p. 72). Various similar anecdotes are cited by Franz, *Die Messe*, pp. 5-6; Shapcote, *Legends of the Sacrament*, p. 79; Ribet, *Mystique divine*, pp. 42-43; and Mussafia, *Marienlegenden*, i. p. 17.

46. *Klosterläsning*, pp. 338-339. A shorter summary of the same legend in *Svenska kyrkobruk*, p. 44. Cf. also Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 189, and Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 110.

47. *Svenska kyrkobruk*, p. 44.

48. Bion, *Le Monde de l'eucharistie*, p. 42.

49. *Acta Sanctorum*, xii. pp. 941-942 (Raymundus Capuensis, *Vita S. Catharinae Senensis*).

50. Broussolle, *Le Christ de la légende dorée*, p. 226. We have not succeeded in ascertaining from what source Broussolle derives his assertion that the

Host flew of itself into Hieronymus's mouth. As this subject is mentioned in connection with Domenichino's painting in the Vatican, "The Communion of S. Hieronymus," it is possible that we have to do here with one of the many legends that have arisen from interpretations of works of art. In the picture in question, as in Agostino Caracci's picture at Bologna, the Host actually stands upright upon the paten, as though ready to float through the air. In Eusebius's [?] *De morte Hieronymi* (*Patr. Lat.* xxii.), which seems to have been the basis for the compositions of the Italian painters, nothing is said of any movement of the Host (cf. especially col. 274 on the Saint's communion).

51. Bion, *op. cit.* p. 91.

52. Stanley (*Christian Institutions*, p. 89) advances the hypothesis that the legends about bleeding Hosts have their origin in a natural phenomenon. It has been observed, he says, that bread is coloured red by a kind of small insects, the traces of which are like drops of blood.

53. Cf. Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, iii. p. 463.

54. Cf. Baring Gould, *op. cit.* v. p. 229, and xii. p. 596 ; Bion, *Le Monde de l'eucharistie*, p. 72. The most famous of all stories of Hosts which bled under the knives of the Jews is that of the miracle in the Rue des Billettes in Paris in 1290. In the Church of S. Jean S. François a service is still celebrated for the atonement of the injury the Sacrament was here exposed to (Huysmans, *Trois églises et trois primitifs*, pp. 118-119). In the Cluny Museum at Paris is preserved a processional insigne in chased copper, representing the miracle that took place when a Host which two Jews sought to destroy in boiling water rose out of the kettle in the form of the Saviour (reproduction of this object in Parmentier, *Album historique*, ii. p. 152). In this connection it is worth mentioning the legend of the Jewish boy who, after having taken the sacrament at Mass, was cast by his father into a burning oven, but was saved by the power of the Host and the help of the Madonna. This miracle is illustrated in a thirteenth-century fresco in the cathedral at Orvieto. Gregorius Turonensis, *De gloria martyrum* (*Patr. Lat.* lxxi. cos., 714-715) ; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la légende dorée*, p. 221.

55. The miracle of Bolsena was by no means unique of its kind. For other stories of bleeding Hosts see Broussolle, *Théorie de la messe*, pp. 174-176.

56. According to popular belief in the Middle Ages, the priests could heal the sick by touching them with their fingers after handling the Host at Mass. Kauffmann (*Caesarius von Heisterbach*, pp. 164-196) gives various examples of this kind of miracles. Not only the Host, but also the corporale, was thought to possess a healing power (Franz, *Die Messe*, pp. 88 and 94). It seems, however, as if a certain shyness was felt of using the Host for these utilitarian purposes, for which recourse was preferably had to relics. On the other hand, the Holy of holies, as is well known, was a powerful means in black magic.

57. At a fire at the Louvre the advance of the flames is said to have been checked after Bossuet had brought out the Host-shrine. This miracle is said to have had an influence on Turenne's becoming a Catholic (Shapcote, *Legends of the Sacrament*, pp. 115-116).

For the use of the corporale as a fire-sail see Franz, *op. cit.* p. 88 ; Raible; *Der Tabernakel*, p. 178.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Bradbury, *The Life of S. Juliana of Cornillon* ; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, iv. pp. 76-87 ; *Acta Sanctorum*, x. pp. 435-475.

2. For more detailed information as to the development of the festival and the time at which the procession was introduced, see *e.g.* Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 304-311.

3. Binterim, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, vi. p. 347; Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 256; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 358. Baldachins are used, when possible, even when the Sacrament is taken to the sick (cf. *e.g.* Daniel, *Codex liturgicus*, i. p. 169).

4. Atz, *Die christliche Kunst*, pp. 227-228.

5. Flaubert, "Un cœur simple" in *Trois Contes*.

6. Shapcote, *Legends of the Sacrament*, p. 143 (quotation from S. Alfonso de Liguori).

7. Cf. Matthews, *The Mass and its Folklore*, pp. 13, 15, 18, 20, 27, 93, 100; *The Lay Folks Mass Book*, p. 130.

8. Cf. Gihr, "Aussetzung des Allerheiligsten," in Wetzer-Welte's *Kirchenlexicon*, i. pp. 1713-1716.

9. For the forms of the monstrances cf. Otte, *Handbuch*, i. pp. 181-183, ii. p. 798 ; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 329 ; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. pp. 472-473. One must distinguish from the monstrances the *custodia*, the exhibition-tabernacles used in the Spanish Corpus Christi processions (cf. Justi, "Die Goldschmiedfamilie Arphe" in *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst*, vii. pp. 290-298, and 333-335).

10. For Melchisedek's sacrifice as a prototype of the Mass sacrifice cf. Psalm cx. 4 (Versio vulgata, cix. 4) ; and Hebrews v. 7 and vii.

11. Ps. xix. 5 (Versio vulgata, xviii. 6) ; Barbier de Montault, *Iconographie chrétienne*, i. p. 110.

12. In his treatise *Raffaels Disputa*, Groner has, by an extensive but, in our opinion, by no means convincing argument, sought to prove that the Host does not occupy the centre of the composition. It is not necessary here to dispute this interpretation. To an unprejudiced observer the Disputa fresco must appear as it was shortly but aptly characterised by Velasquez in one of his letters from Rome, namely, as "the great painting in which theology is harmonised with philosophy, and *in the midst of which* the Supreme Good stands upon the altar" (cf. Justi, *Velasquez*, i. p. 288).

13. For the name of the composition and the interpretations to which this gave rise see Passavant, *Rafael*, i. p. 140, and Müntz, *Raphaël*, p. 334.

CHAPTER IX

1. For references to the patristic literature see Binterim, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, ii. 2, pp. 134 *seq.* ; Durand, *Rational*, i. pp. 334 *seq.* (Barthélemy's notes) ; Laib und Schwarz, *Studien*, pp. 27 *seq.* ; Otte, *Handbuch*, i. p. 178 ; Hertkens, *Sakramentshäuschen*, p. 3.

2. Rock, *Hierurgia*, i. p. 260 ; Binterim, *op. cit.* ii. 2, p. 99 ; Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 301 (reference to Ambrosius, *De excessu Satyri*).

3. See *Acta Sanctorum*, xxxvii. p. 201 ; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, ix.

p. 143. Falguière's statue in the Luxembourg has made the legend of Tharsicius widely known.

4. Bion, *Le Monde de l'eucharistie*, p. 229.

5. Baring Gould, *op. cit.* i. p. 453.

6. Cf. Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 27.

7. Thiers, *Traité de l'exposition du S. Sacrament de l'autel, passim*; Binterim, *op. cit.* ii. 2, p. 134; Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, v. p. 59; Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 177-178.

8. Cf. Schultze's criticism of the information given in earlier literature as to eucharistic vessels of the first centuries (*Archäologie der altchristlichen Kunst*, pp. 275 and 310). See also Raible, *Der Tabernakel*, p. 67.

9. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iv. p. 240.

10. This etymology is advanced by Otte, *op. cit.* i. p. 180, and adopted by Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 329. According to another interpretation the name "ciborium" refers to the Host-vessel's function of enclosing the heavenly food, *cibus* (cf. A. Müller, art. *Hostie* in Ersch und Grüber, *Encyklopädie*, ii. Sec. Th. xi. p. 186). Hildebrand (*Sveriges medeltid*, iii. p. 568) considers that the Sacrament-preservers were the first "ciboria," and that the term was transferred from them to the erection above the altar. The general view is that "ciborium" is derived from the Greek name of a cup-shaped fruit, the form of which recalled the vaulted roof above the altar (cf. *e.g.* Raible, *op. cit.* p. 163).

11. For more exact chronological information as to the origin of the new custom see Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 73. It is supposed that the first man to begin the preserving of the Sacrament in the altar-piece was Guibertus of Verona (Bishop 1524-1543; cf. Raible, *op. cit.* pp. 238 *seq.*).

12. The idea that all Church art involves a homage to the eucharistic God is of fundamental importance to the ritual system of the Benedictines (cf. Dom Besse, *Le Moine bénédictin*, esp. p. 181).

13. For exceptions from this rule, and for information as to the time when the sacramental lamp was introduced, see Legg, *Ecclesiological Essays*, pp. 29-30.

14. Rio, *Essais liturgiques sur l'ornamentation des églises*, p. 102. For the conopies see Raible, *op. cit.* pp. 207 and 269.

15. Rio, *op. cit.* p. 99.

16. Seuse, *Deutsche Schriften*, pp. 166 and 462. Devotion towards the tabernacle is one of the most remarkable traits in the life of the modern French Church. Some notable examples of the ecstasy experienced by the faithful before the dwelling-place of the Host are to be found in the diary of the French nun Marianne Hervé Bazin (Mme. S. S., *Une Religieuse réparatrice*, pp. 91-92, 198, 347).

17. For the influence of the Ark of the Covenant on the architecture of the tabernacle see Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* ii. p. 65.

18. Binterim, *op. cit.* iv. 1. pp. 118-119; Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iv. pp. 235-236, 239, 264; Jakob, *Die Kunst im Dienste der Kirche*, pp. 74-77; Dale, *The Sacristan's Manual*, p. 23.

19. For chronological and topographical information as to the origin of the freestanding and attached tabernacles see Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* pp. 59-60, 72 *seq.*; Otte, *op. cit.* i. pp. 183 *seq.*; Hertkens, *Sakramentshäuschen*, p. 5; Raible, *op. cit.* pp. 69, 171, 173 *seq.*

20. For a reproduction of this gorgeous tabernacle see Schmidt, *Sevilla*, p. 75. Another famous example of this type is the tabernacle sculptured in stone by Corneille Floris de Vriendt.

21. Cf. *e.g.* the little wooden tower at Senanque (Vaucluse), reproduced in Enlart's *Manuel d'archéologie*, i. p. 746.

22. This type is represented in Finland by a slender little tabernacle in the church at Nådendal. An aquarelle by Albert Edelfelt is preserved in the Historical Museum at Helsingfors. For historical information as to the tower tabernacle during the early Middle Ages see Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* pp. 29 *seq.* The eucharistic dove seems in some cases to have been represented on the top of a tower (cf. Binterim, *op. cit.* ii. 2. p. 172).

23. Cf. Weerth, E. aus'm, *Kunstdenkmäler in den Rheinlanden* (*passim*).

24. Not only was there a fear of the Jews, who, according to popular Catholic belief, never omitted any opportunity of getting possession of the Host. Magicians and witches were eager to acquire the Sacrament; and still more was the Holy of holies threatened by the Satanists, whose black masses haunted the minds of the faithful for centuries. Cf. the information as to the theft of wafers given in Huysmans's preface to Jules Bois's *Le Satanisme et la magie*, and in Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iv. p. 241. Further information as to the black cults is to be found in Görres, *Christliche Mystik*, pp. 286 *seq.*

25. For the fortifications around the doves and the other Host-shrines see Caumont, *Abécédaire*, pp. 573-574, and Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* v. pp. 70 and 79. The fortress motive is often met with in the embellishment of other ecclesiastical implements besides "ciboria" (Hildebrand, *Sveriges medeltid*, iii. pp. 327, 331, 351). The significance of the tower as a symbol of power is also set forth by Hildebrand (*ibid.* p. 569).

26. Cf. *e.g.* Pératé in Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, i. p. 32.

27. The best-known examples are the graves represented in the famous ivory reliefs at Munich, at Florence, and in the British Museum.

28. It seems probable that these grave-pictures, in a number of cases, imitate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which has also been the model for many reliquaries (Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe*, v. p. 69).

29. Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* v. p. 62; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. p. 466.

30. Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* v. p. 67.

31. Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* ii. p. 65. For the connection between the grave and the Host-preserver cf. also Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae*, (*Patr. Lat.* clxxii. col. 163).

32. Cf. the reproductions in Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* v. pp. 65 and 67.

33. Cf. *e.g.* Lorenzo Vecchietta's sacrament-house in the Cathedral of Siena, crowned by a statue of the Risen Saviour; Benedetto da Majano's tabernacle in S. Damiano at Siena, also crowned by the Risen Saviour; Donatello's tabernacle in the sacristry of S. Peter's at Rome, with a relief of the entombment in the top compartment; Andrea Sansovino's sacrament-altar in S. Spirito at Florence, with the entombment in relief and the Risen Saviour on the door of the Host-shrine; Desiderio da Settignano's tabernacle from S. Lorenzo at Florence and Andrea della Robbia's sacrament-altar in S. Maria delle Grazie at Arezzo, both with the entombment; and Luca della Robbia's tabernacle at Peretola, with the entombment in the lunette and the Risen Saviour on the door.

34. Durand, *Rational*, i. p. 53.

35. Hildebrand (*Sveriges medeltid*, iii. p. 570, *Kyrkliga Konsten*, p. 129) says that, according to the Protestant view, these embellishments are not very suitable. To pious Catholics, however it was quite natural to recall the Madonna in the decoration of the Host-shrine.

36. Laib und Schwarz, *op. cit.* p. 30.

37. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 105.

38. Thomas Aquinas, *Sacrament of the Altar*, pp. 182-183.

39. *De imitatione Christi*, p. 343 (lib. iv. cap. xi.). These expressions correspond generally with some phrases of Johannes Chrysostomus, Περὶ ἱερωσύνης (*De sacerdotio*) (*Patr. Graec.* xlviii. col. 681).

40. S. Bernardus, *Instructio sacerdotis* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiv. col. 786).

41. It should not be overlooked that Birgitta saw in the high calling of the priests a reason for severely condemning all those who celebrate the Mass with unworthy thoughts (*Uppenbarelser*, i. pp. 143-151, 157, 159, 171; ii. pp. 118 *seq.*; iii. pp. 13 and 257). Cf., however, cap. vi. note 25 as to how, even in Birgitta's opinion, the Sacrament lost none of its effectiveness if celebrated by an unworthy priest.

42. Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, pp. 29, 144-145, 176-178; *Speculum perfectionis*, p. 94.

43. Cf. *e.g.* the contributions to the psychology of communicants to be found in Huysmans's *En route*, pp. 180, 278, 377-379, and in Rodenbach, *Musée de Béguines*, pp. 190 and 129.

44. *De imitatione Christi*, p. 359 (lib. iv. cap. xvii.).

45. Durand, *op. cit.* i. p. 53.

CHAPTER X

1. Cf. Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, pp. 44-45.

2. Cf. Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 225 ("L'Évangile ne dit rien d'inutile").

3. Cook, *Holy Bible with Commentary*, N.T. i. p. 320.

4. Renan, *Les Évangiles*, p. 542 (Appendice: Les frères et les cousins de Jésus).

5. Cf. *e.g.* Meyer, *Handbuch*, N.T. i. p. 67 (bibliographical information as to early interpretations of this passage).

6. See Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, pp. 26-27, on Hieronymus's explanations.

7. In Cook's Anglican Bible Commentary, *op. cit.* p. 7, this passage is, strangely enough, left quite unexplained.

8. Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 3; Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 333.

9. Cf. Renan, *Les Évangiles*, pp. 49-50, 105; Strauss, *op. cit.* p. 344.

10. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 6 *seq.*

11. *Ibid.* p. 9 (cf. Brandes, *Jesaja*, pp. 18-19).

12. Renan, *L'Église chrétienne*, p. 266 (story of Mary and the soldier Panthera).

13. Renan, *op. cit.* p. 121.

14. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity*, pp. 88-90; Renan, *op. cit.* p. 358; Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. p. 53.

15. Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, pp. 185-186.

16. *Ibid.* p. 128.

17. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, pp. 420-421; Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 41 *seq.*

18. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 2 *seq.*; Lehner, *op. cit.* pp. 132 *seq.*

19. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 437.

20. Lehner, *op. cit.* pp. 79 *seq.*; Augusti, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 32 *seq.*; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, i. pp. 422-423.

21. Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 78; Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 321.

22. Livius, *The Blessed Virgin*, p. 343; Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 347.

23. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, pp. xxii and 25.

24. Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, pp. 411, 460-461.

CHAPTER XI

1. The summary here given is based on A. Meyer's translation in Hennecke's *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, pp. 54-63.

2. Meyer in Hennecke's *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, p. 109.

3. *Ibid.* p. 109.

4. *Ibid.* p. 109. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, p. 11.

5. The commentators have not succeeded in finding out what feast-day is referred to in the story. For a detailed discussion of this question see Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 109; Hofmann, *op. cit.* pp. 10 and 25.

6. For an explanation of this sign see Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 113. Hofmann, *op. cit.* p. 30.

7. Cf. Luke i. 46.

8. Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 113.

9. The idea that Joseph was an old widower is found also in the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter (Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 118); but it is probably through the narrative of James that it has been disseminated in the Church.

10. Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 122.

11. Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, p. 424.

12. Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 123, leaves it undecided whether the words "His praises" refer to the choirs of angels or to the music of the temple singers.

13. *Ibid.* p. 125; Hofmann, *op. cit.* pp. 101-102.

14. Meyer, *op. cit.* p. 127.

15. Meyer in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, p. 53 (Introduction to the translation of the Gospel of James).

16. *Ibid.* p. 52.

17. *Ibid.* p. 52. Cf., however, Broussolle, *De la Conception à l'Annonciation*, pp. 210-211, 264-265.

18. *Ibid.* p. 51.

19. *Ibid.* p. 48.

20. *Ibid.* pp. 48 and 51.

21. Hofmann, *op. cit.* p. 75.

22. Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, pp. 237 *seq.*; Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. xxii *seq.* See also Bäckström, *Svenska folkböcker*, ii. pp. 159-163.

CHAPTER XII

1. The earliest Fathers already zealously defend Mary against the suspicions of sinful doubt which might be wakened by her answer to Gabriel (cf. *e.g.* the extracts from the writings of Ambrosius and Augustine given by Livius, *The Blessed Virgin*, pp. 130, 134, and 218).

2. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, p. 6. Cf. also Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 587 ; *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, p. 3 (Jungfru Mariasagan) ; Bäckström, *Svenska folkböcker*, ii. p. 163 (Jesu barndomsbok).

3. The mothers of Mary and Samuel both bore the name *Anna*, and were both religious *poetesses*. Every time Samuel's father, Elkanah, offered a sacrifice, he gave a part to his wife Pennina and to the children he had by her, but to Anna who was *barren* he gave a *double part*. Anna was *mocked* by his other wife, just as her namesake in the Apocryphal gospel was mocked by her servant. She *prayed* with tears to the Highest that she might be freed from her dishonour, and she *promised* to give her child to Him for its lifetime. When her son was born she thanked God in a *song of praise*, and *triumphed* over those who had despised her.—In a sequence in Anna's honour (printed in *Analecta hymnica*, viii. p. 102) Joachim's wife is compared with the mother of Tobias—

Pater mittens Annae natum
Cum chirographo ad cognatum
Raphaelem reperit.

This Anna also had borne a pious son, who was her only child ; her husband Tobit was charitable like Joachim, and he too divided his sacrifice into three parts. Lastly, in the scene where Anna awaits her husband, a certain analogy to the story of Tobias's return home can be traced. The author of the sequence is guilty of an error, however, when in the following strophe he sings—

Anna Rachuelis nata
Septem viris viduata
Tobiae conjungitur.

For Rachuel's daughter and Tobias's wife, who married seven times but each time became a widow immediately after the wedding, was not called Anna but Sarah. The analogies pointed out, however, make it intelligible why the Gospel of James led people's thoughts to the popular romance of Tobias.—It has also been thought possible to find correspondences to the Old Testament narrative in hagiographical literature. Nicolaus of Myra was the son of an Anna, who had given up the hope of having any children ; and the saintly Pierre Fourier, who was consecrated to the service of God from childhood, was borne by a woman who bore the same name as the mothers of Samuel and Mary. In these coincidences Ernest Hello sees a proof that the name Anna was deliberately selected to signify the types of the pious mother (cf. *Physionomics de Saints*, pp. 243-245).

4. Another expression of the same popular thought is to be found in the idea that the mightiest magicians are men born from forbidden unions, *i.e.* produced by a transgression of binding and universally recognised moral law (cf. Hirn, *Förstudier till en konstfilosofi*, p. 118).

5. An utterance of Bede on the birth of John the Baptist may here be cited (*Homilia in vigilia S. Joannis Baptistae*, *Patr. Lat.* xciv. col. 205): "Sic Jacob et Joseph patriarchae, sic Samson fortissimus ducum, et prophetarum eximius Samuel steriles diu corpore, sed fecundas semper virtutibus habuere genitrices, ut miraculo nativitatis natorum dignitas nosceretur, et probarentur sublimes in vita futuri, qui in ipso vitae exortu conditionis humanae jura transcenderent." Quoted incompletely by Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, p. 23.

6. Cf. A. Meyer in *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, p. 110.

7. For a detailed summary of the discussions of the age of this saint's day see Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 102-104. Cf. also Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, p. 486; Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, pp. 79-80.

In a poem ascribed to Wace is related a legend of the origin of the Birthday festival. On a certain September night, during many successive years, a pious man had heard the angels in heaven sending up a clear and loud song. When he observed that the concert was always repeated on the same date, he prayed "with prayers and fasting and mortification" that God would let him know why the people of Heaven celebrated this particular night with such solemn music. Finally, he was favoured by a vision in which it was explained to him that it was Mary's birth that was celebrated in Heaven. He immediately betook himself to Rome to communicate his vision to the Pope, and after the latter was convinced of the man's sincerity a great Council was summoned at which the keeping of Mary's birthday was commanded throughout Christendom.

The poem is printed in extenso in Reinsch, *Die Pseudo-Evangelien von Jesu und Marias Kindheit in der romanischen und germanischen Literatur*, pp. 21-25.

The same legend is related briefly by Johannes Beleth (*Rationale divinorum officiorum*, cap. 149, *Patr. Lat.* ccii. col. 152), by Durand (*Rational*, v. p. 85), and by Jacobus de Voragine (*Legenda aurea*, p. 590).

8. The miraculous element in John's conception is cited by Augustine as one of the reasons why the Church celebrated his birth. Another reason was the testimony to John's greatness which the Saviour Himself had given (Matt. xi. 11). On the other hand, Augustine does not mention the sanctification in the womb. See Augustine's speech at a feast of S. John, translated by Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 162-167.

9. The mediaeval writers in their sermons give a detailed account of the reasons for the celebration of the saint's *Birth*-day. S. Bernard cites the words of the angel to Zacharias: "Many shall rejoice at his birth" (Luke i. 14). He further mentions the miracle which took place when, at the Visitation, John the Baptist—"the burning and shining light" (John v. 35)—was lit with a heavenly fire even before his birth:—"New was this fire, which a little before descended from Heaven, and through Gabriel's mouth entered the Virgin's ear, thence from the Virgin's mouth through the mother's ear to reach the child. From that moment the Holy Ghost filled its chosen vessel, and made it a lamp for God"—S. Bernard, *In nativitate S. Joannis Baptistae sermo* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. cols. 397-401). Cf. also Bernard's *Epistola ad canonicos Lugduncnses* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxii. cols. 333-334). The same line of thought is pursued, with new rhetorical embroiderings, by the Abbot Guerricus in various sermons. In these is also treated the miraculous element in John's birth, and the angel's words as to the joy his birth would arouse—Guerricus Abbas, *In nativitate S. Joannis Baptistae sermones* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxv. 1, cols. 163-171). More important, however, is an anonymous sermon on John's ten privileges. According to Migne, this sermon seems to have been written at a time when Mary's birthday was not yet recognised as a Church festival. The first of John's privileges, we are told, is that his birth was announced by an angel, the second that he was sanctified in his mother's womb, the third that even before his birth he rejoiced in God, and the fourth that there was joy over his birth. "Blush, O Devil," exclaims the preacher, "blush thy because efforts have been

thwarted. . . . Through thy endeavours was it brought about that all men are conceived in sin and born in sorrow. But lo! this one is sanctified even in his mother's womb, comes forth with joy, and spreads joy over the world at his birth" (*Appendix ad S. Bernardum; Sermo in nativitate S. Joannis Baptistae De decem privilegiis ejus, Patr. Lat.* clxxxiv. cols. 991 *seq.*).

10. S. Bernardus, *In assumptione sermo*, ii. (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. cols. 420-421) (quoted by Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, p. 84); *Epistola ad canonicos Lugdunenses* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxii. col. 334). Cf. also Durand, *Rational*, v. p. 85.

11. Cf. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 53 *seq.*

12. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. p. 95.

13. *Ibid.* p. 102; Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 107.

14. *Ibid.* p. 105 (extract from a sermon by Andreas Cretensis on Mary's birthday, in which the writer praises St. Anna).

15. The festival is mentioned under this name as late as the tenth century in Basilius Porphyrogenitus, *Menologium* (*Patr. Graeca*, cxvii. col. 195). Herzog (*op. cit.* p. 105) has collected from the Greek Patrology a great deal of information as to the festival of the Conception.

16. Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 105.

17. Augusti, *op. cit.* iii. p. 96; Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, p. 128; Bishop, *The Origins of the Feast of the Conception*, p. 8; Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 106. The earlier writers make many incorrect statements which have been corrected by later investigation. For a general bibliography of the subject see Herzog's work.

18. *Ad opera S. Anselmi appendix—Spuria; Sermo de conceptione Mariae* (*Patr. Lat.* clix. cols. 319 *seq.*). Elsi's vision is related in many mediaeval collections of legends, *e.g.* in Wace's *La Conception Nostre Dame* and in Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de la Vierge*. See Nielsen, *Evangeliesagn*, pp. 20-21.

In some variations Mary's envoy is S. Nicolas, who was a patron of all seafarers (cf. Waterton, *op. cit.* p. 128).

19. The clerk's offence was that, in spite of his worship of the Virgin Mary, he had entered into an earthly marriage. The monk had betaken himself upon a nocturnal adventure, and was drowned on his sinful way. His soul, however, was reunited to his body after he, or rather the soul, had promised to make an effective propaganda of the Conception festival. Both these legends are related in the sermon of Pseudo-Anselmus (*Patr. Lat.* clix.), which has already been referred to, and are found in most collections of Mary-miracles. The condition of the Conception festival, however, seems to have been added by the anonymous preacher.

20. S. Bernardus, *Epistola ad canonicos Lugdunenses* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxii.).

21. Eadmer, Osbert, Petrus Comestor, Nicolaus de S. Alban, Oger, and others attempted to refute S. Bernard's assertions in dogmatic tracts (cf. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 119-120). They wished to show that God was perfectly well able to free His own mother from the guilt which weighed upon the rest of the human race. Petrus Comestor, or the unknown author of a sermon which bears his name, even maintained, in opposition to S. Bernard, that Mary was sanctified before her conception, *i.e.* before she existed at all. This assertion is not, however, quite so absurd as one is tempted to think. For it has been argued that the talk as to the Virgin's purity *before* her conception probably refers to a popular belief prevalent in the Middle Ages, according to which

Mary's organism was formed from a piece separated by God from Adam's body before the first man stained himself by sin (cf. Scheeben, "Empfängniss, Unbefleckte" in Wetzer-Welte, *Kirchenlexicon*, iv. p. 470).

22. *Ad opera S. Anselmi appendix; Sermo de conceptione B. Mariae* (*Patr. Lat.* clix. cols. 319-324). This text is summarised and criticised in detail by Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 120-121. The authorship of the remarkable sermon has often been ascribed to Anselm's nephew (cf. Rigg, *S. Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 206 *seq.*).

23. Cf. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 139 *seq.*

24. To remove the effects of S. Bernard's criticisms of the Conception dogma, a legend was spread that the great abbot had revealed himself to a lay brother at Clairvaux, clad in a snow-white garment, but with a large brown stain on his breast. This stain he carried, S. Bernard said, because he had written what he ought not to have written concerning the Madonna's conception. The lay brother related his vision to the monks, and one of them carefully noted down his narrative. But when the matter was later debated at a general council the writing was burned, "for the abbots valued Bernard's good name more than the Virgin's honour." The legend is told in a letter from Nicolas of S. Albans to Peter of Celles (*Patr. Lat.* ccii. col. 623). The letter is quoted in Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry*, p. 29.

For the rest, the force of Bernard's letter to the canons of Lyons was minimised by the addition of a phrase at the end, in which the writer previously submitted to the Pope's opinion in the matter of Mary's conception (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxii. col. 336).

25. Seville and Naples, for example, are headquarters of the cult of Anna, as well as of the worship of "Maria Concetta."

26. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 58. Peculiarly enough the compiler of this gospel has omitted to exclude the line in the Gospel of James, according to which the angel expressly says to Joachim, "She shall conceive of thy seed." (Cf. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu*, pp. 24-25.) That during the tenth century in the Eastern Church a belief existed in some places of a virginal conception of Anna, appears from an expression in Basilius Porphyrogenitus's *Menologium*, in which this heresy is controverted (*Patr. Graeca*, cxvii. col. 195). According to Hofmann, *op. cit.* p. 24, it was in the twelfth century that Anna began to be regarded in Europe as a virgin.

27. As Trithemius's (or Tritenheim's) important writings have not been accessible to the author, it has been impossible to express a more definite opinion about his doctrine. Some noteworthy extracts are given by Schaumkell, *Der Kultus der heiligen Anna*, pp. 36 *seq.*, and by Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 229-230. These extracts will be touched upon in greater detail in the following, viz. note 53 in this chapter.

28. Benedictus XIV., *De Jesu Christi matrisque ejus festis*, p. 304.

29. The legend of Anna and Fanuel has been interpolated in Wace's poem *Conception Nostre Dame*, and in Herman de Valencienne's *Bible*. Detailed bibliographical information is to be found in Chabaneau's introduction, *Le Romanz de Saint Fanuel*. For a summary of the legend see Nielsen, *Evangeliesagn*, pp. 13 *seq.*

30. The poem does not expressly say that the fruits in question are derived from the above-mentioned tree (cf. Chabaneau, *op. cit.* p. 109). It is, however, a justifiable supposition that the poet was here thinking of the same miraculous tree described in detail at the beginning of the legend.

31. Chabaneau, *op. cit.* p. 20 :—

> Cele nuit jurent il ensemble,
> Si egendrerent, ce me semble,
> Nostre dame sainte Marie.

32. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu*, p. 17.

33. *Ibid.* p. 19.

34. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. p. 84 ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 282 ; Montault, *Iconographie chrétienne*, ii. p. 204 ; Chabaneau, *Le Romanz de S. Fanuel*, p. 110.

35. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 203.

36. Cf. Huysmans, *Trois églises et trois primitifs*, pp. 24-25, 168. A confirmation of this view is found in almost every chapter of Mâle's epoch-making work, by which the dependence of the artists on the directions of patrons has been demonstrated more irrefutably than ever before.

37. For further information as to the iconography of the Gospel of James see Schultz, *Die Legende vom Leben der Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 35 *seq.* ; Venturi, *La Madone*, pp. 79 *seq.* ; Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 202 ; Gabelentz, *Die kirchliche Kunst im italienischen Mittelalter*, pp. 187 *seq.* ; Broussolle, *De la conception immaculée à l'annonciation angélique*, pp. 130 *seq.*, 159 *seq.*

38. From the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, the meeting at the Golden Gate serves as an illustration of the Conception dogma (Grimouard de S. Laurent, *op. cit.* iv. p. 82 ; Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, ii. p. 73).

39. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *op. cit.* p. 84.

40. The picture has earlier, though unconvincingly, been ascribed to Pesello. According to Morelli it is the work of Filippo Lippi.

41. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 204.

42. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *op. cit.* iv. p. 84 (quotation from Molanus and Robert de Licio). Cf. also Justi, *Velasquez*, i. p. 143.

For the new type of the "conceptio immaculata" see Broussolle, *op. cit.* pp. 133 *seq.* ; Muñoz, *Iconografia della Madonna*, pp. 102 *seq.* ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 226 *seq.*

43. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. p. 22.

44. Trombelli, *Sanctae Mariae vita* in Bourassé, *Summa aurea*, i. p. 28.

45. Emmerich, *Leben der hlg. Jungfrau Maria, aufgeschrieben von Clemens Brentano*, p. 51.

46. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iii. p. 127.

47. Schaumkell, *Der Kultus der hlg. Anna*, pp. 42 *seq.* ; Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, viii. p. 567 ; *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, iii. p. 585 *seq.*

48. *Acta sanctorum*, Martii, tom. i. p. 556 (edition 1668), quoted by Schultz, *op. cit.* p. 39.

49. For information as to the treatment of the motive in art, see Schultz, *op. cit.* pp. 38-44 ; Montault, *op. cit.* pp. 208-210 ; Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 206.

50. The analysis given in the text of the typical family portraits has its closest correspondence in a French-Flemish picture dating from about 1500, which is preserved in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum at Cologne (No. 426 in the catalogue of this museum). Artistically, the most important of all "Sippenbilder" is the centre picture in Quentin Massy's triptych at Brussels.

51. Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita*, in Bourassé, *Summa aurea*, i. pp. 225 *seq.* In the new edition of *Acta Sanctorum* the story of S. Colette's vision has been excluded from her biography ; cf. vol. vii. p. 558 (March 6). This story

is summarised and controverted, on the other hand, in the chapter on S. Anna, vol. xxxiii. p. 242 (July 26).

52. Cf. *e.g.* Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, pp. 261, 270-271.

53. *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, p. 151. Latin text to this Swedish translation, *ibid.* p. 245.

Trithemius, who at the close of the fifteenth century worked more zealously than any one else for the cult of Anna, employs a no less exalted but more naturalistic expression than the anonymous author of *Jungfru Marie örtagård*. He turns with his praises to that womb in which the Ark of God was built, and in which the Queen of Heaven dwelt: "O numquam sine honore nominandus uterus, in quo archa dei sine macula meruit fabricari. . . . Beatus venter, qui celi dominam portavit, felicia ubera, quae lactare matrem dei meruerunt" (*Tractatus de laudibus sanctissime Anne*, quoted by Schaumkell, *Der Kultus der hlg. Anna*, p. 40). These pious interjections are cited also by Mâle (*L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, p. 229), who considers that Trithemius with his writings gave a new character to the worship of the Virgin's mother. The expressions used in the Swedish Prayer-Book prove, however, that the German humanist was by no means the first to praise Anne in her character of a treasure-chamber for Mary. To find the earliest instance of this rhetorical motive, we must go even further back than the *Marie örtagård*. For as early as in Johannes Damascenus we find a song of praise celebrating Anna's womb: "O praeclarum Annae uterum, in quo tacitis incrementis ex ea auctus est, et formatus fuit foetus sanctissimus! O uterum, in quo animatum coelum, coelorum latitudine latius conceptum fuit" (*Homilia I. in nativitate B. V. Mariae*; *Patr. Graeca*, xcvi. col. 663), quoted in Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita* in Bourassé, *Summa aurea*, i. p. 21.

It is very probable that in the works of Trithemius, which are only known to us by extracts (cf. note 27, above), many borrowings from earlier authors could be discovered. Thus Schaumkell cites (*op. cit.* p. 37) a phrase as to Anna's sanctity, which is derived from that of Mary in the same way that the worth of a tree is determined by its fruits: "Sicut arbor ex suo fructu cognoscitur, ita qualis sit mater in filia declaratur. In dei genitrice sanctissima accipimus, quid de sanctitate matris sentire debeamus. . . ." This reminds one of the chapter of *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, iii. p. 13, which is headed "S. Anna jämföres med ett trä" (S. Anna compared to a tree; manuscript from the middle of the fifteenth century). This argument also can be traced back to Johannes Damascenus (*op. cit.* col. 667), even if the simile of the tree is not employed by him, "O beatum par Joachim et Anna, immaculatissimum prorsus! Ex fructu ventris vestri cognoscimini, velut alicubi Dominus ait: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos."

54. Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 230-231 (reproduction of a gravure in *Les Heures de Simon Vostre à l'usage d'Angers*, 1510; description of glass-paintings from the close of the sixteenth century in French churches). Muñoz, *Iconografia della Madonna*, p. 102; Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 206 (description of an enamel from Limoges, dated 1545, in the Cluny Museum).

55. Montault, *op. cit.* p. 206.

56. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, pp. 334-335; Montault, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 210-211. Montault points out that the corporation of joiners at Paris, when it made its medal in 1748, represented on it a picture of Anna instructing Mary, with the device "Sic fingit tabernaculum Deo." Thus they preferred to compare their work with the spiritual "building" of Mary's *soul*. To judge

by the poetical metaphors, however, it was easier for mediaeval piety to worship Mary as a bodily tabernacle.

57. The method of placing the two mothers side by side seems to have been peculiar to German, French, and Flemish painters. Lucas Cranach and many unknown artists employed this arrangement, which was probably in a number of cases borrowed from the great "Sippenbilder." The Italian masters usually represent Anna behind Mary (Masaccio, Perugino, Antoniazzo Romano, etc.).

58. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 184.

59. Cf. *e.g. Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, iii. p. 14 (continuation of the earlier cited extract about Anna as a good tree). Schaumkell, *Der Kultus der hlg. Anna*, pp. 66 *seq.*, gives instances of prayers in which Anna is invoked for a direct intercession to the Saviour. These prayers date from the beginning of the sixteenth century.

60. Cf. Serao, Matilde, *La Madonna e i santi*, p. 309, as to the cult of Anna at Naples.

CHAPTER XIII

1. Innocentius III., *De contemptu mundi*, in *Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. cols. 701-746.

2. The following summary of the narrative poems on the life of Mary is mainly based on the writings mentioned below: *Vita Beate Virginis Marie et Salvatoris Nostri rhythmica* (first half of the thirteenth century); Walther von Rheinau, *Marienleben* (fourteenth-century German poetical translation of the *Vita rhythmica*); Wernher von Tegernsee, *Driu Liet von der Maget* (written about 1172); Philipp der Karthäuser, *Marienleben* (fourteenth century); *Cursor mundi* (anonymous Northumbrian poem of the fourteenth century, containing a description of Mary's life based in essentials on Wace's *Conception N. Dame*); Escobar y Mendoza (1589-1669), *Historia de la Virgen Madre de Dios.* A detailed account of the handling of the Madonna's life by the German poets is given by P. Küchenthal, *Die Mutter Gottes in der altdeutschen schönen Literatur.*

3. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. p. 102; Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, pp. 486-487. The festival is supposed to have arisen in the East as early as the sixth century, and must have spread to Europe during the following centuries.

4. Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 83.

5. For iconographical information as to the representations of Mary's birth see Schultz, *Die Legende vom Leben der Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 46-47. A rich selection of reproductions is given by Venturi, *La Madone.*

6. Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 82.

7. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. p. 89.

8. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 200.

9. *Vita B. V. Marię rhythmica*, p. 24.

10. Walther v. Rheinau, *Marienleben*, i. p. 18. The German paraphrase is in this chapter even more explicit than its Latin original.

11. Philipp der Karthäuser, *Marienleben*, p. 11. An indirect reproach to the mothers who shirked the duty of nursing their children is to be found as early as in the *Vita rhythmica.* It is said of Anne on p. 24:—

> Non ut solent homines extraneam quaesivit
> Nutricem mater puero; sed ipsamet nutrivit
> Propriis uberibus prolem et lactavit.

12. Philipp der Karthäuser, *op. cit.* p. 110 :—

züchteclîch siner muoter brust
âne girlîchen gelust
ze tîen pllac daz kindelîn,
maêzic was diu spîse sîn.

13. *Vita B.V. Marie rhythmica*, p. 33.
14. *Ibid.* p. 32.
15. *Ibid.* p. 34 ; Wernher, *Driu Liet*, pp. 36-37.
16. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 36 :—

Fuit enim condolens atque compassiva,
Misericors, compatiens, et caritativa.
Gaudebat cum gaudentibus, cum letis letabatur,
Flebatque cum flentibus, cum mestis tristabatur.

17. Nielsen, *Evangeliesagn*, p. 34 (quotation from Gautier de Coincy, *La nativité Notre Seigneur*).
18. *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, iii. p. 4.
19. The following pages are a summary and translations from Ambrosius, *De virginibus ad Marcellam*, iii. ; in *Patr. Lat.* xvi. cols. 220-221.
20. It was probably Ambrosius's description that was the foundation for a hymn of the fifteenth century :—

. . . . .
Noctu quando dormitas,
Corde simul vigilasti
Numquam vacans otio.
(*Analecta hymnica*, ix. p. 49.)

21. *Vita rhythmica*, pp. 30-32 ; Walther v. Rheinau, *Marienleben*, i. pp. 23-26 ; cf. also the precious description of Mary's bodily beauty in Johannis Franconis *Carmen magistrale de beata Maria V.* (fifteenth century), *Analecta hymnica*, xxix. pp. 185-202.
22. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 32 :—

Erecta sursum procedens semper ambulabat,
Et decenter caput ejus parum inclinabat,
Ut pudicas virgines decet ambulare
Que non solent nimium cervicem elevare ;
Nam omnis motus virginis, incessus atque status
Decens erat et pudicus, ac disciplinatus.

It is of interest to compare these verses with the way in which the bearing of Jesus is described in the same poem, p. 112 :—

Collum Jesu pulchrum erat, planum atque rectum.
Semper ipse gessit hoc decenter et erectum.
Raro suum tenuit collum incurvatum,
Quia semper habuit caput elevatum.
Nam sepe celum oculis hic respiciebat,
Et ad patrem semper ejus intentum cor habebat.

It seems that not even the most eminent of all women was accorded the right "erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

23. Cf. S. Bernardus, *De laudibus virginis matris* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. col. 59); Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iv. p. 73; Juliana of Norwich, *Revelations*, pp. 9 and 15.

24. *Medeltidsdikter*, p. 227 (Sv. Fornskr. Sällsk. Saml.).

25. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 107-108; Broussolle, *De la Conception immaculée à l'Annonciation angélique*, pp. 210-215.

26. Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 215.

27. Cf. *e.g.* the offices printed in *Analecta hymnica*, v. pp. 59-70, xxiv. pp. 81 *seq.*

28. Philipp der Karthäuser, *Marienleben*, p. 13.

29. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 24; Walther v. Rheinau, *Marienleben*, i. p. 18.

30. Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 106.

31. Of the compositions mentioned in the text the frescoes of Gaddi and Giovanni da Milano are in S. Croce and that of Ghirlandajo in S. Maria Novella at Florence; Carpaccio's picture is preserved in the Brera gallery at Milan, Cima da Conegliano's in the Dresden gallery, Tintoretto's in S. Maria dell' Orto, and Titian's in the Accademia at Venice. In Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, Anna, contrary to the legend, supports her daughter as she ascends the stairs. For fuller information as to the iconography of the subject see the earlier-cited works of Detzel, Schultz, and Reinach. Cf. also Grant Allen, *Evolution in Italian Art.*

32. Cf. *e.g.* Roger van der Weyden's picture in the Royal Museum at Brussels and the carved altar-cabinet at Vörå, in Finland (reproduced and described in Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp*, pp. 237 *seq.*).

33. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. pp. 95-96.

34. Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 212.

35. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 28.

36. Cf. Fra Gil de Zamora's poem *De beata Maria* (fourteenth century), included in *Analecta hymnica*, xvi. p. 62:—

. . .
Huic spiritus angelici
Devote assistebant,
Manna saporis coelici
De sursum afferebant,
Quo viscera sacrifera
Cibario, sacrario
Mire reficiebat.

37. Wernher von Tegernsee, *Driu Liet*, pp. 33 *seq.*

38. Philipp der Karthäuser, *Marienleben*, p. 39.

39. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 217 (*De annuntiatione*).

40. Sicardus Cremonensis, *Mitrale* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxiii. col. 421). The same thought is expressed by Durand, *Rationale*, iii. p. 224.

CHAPTER XIV

1. Cf. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, p. 492.

2. Important specimens of poetical paraphrases of the narrative of the Annunciation are met with, especially among *The Psalters of Mary*. These song-cycles are so called because Mary's virtues are celebrated in them in as

many strophes or in as many separate poems as there are Psalms in the Psalter. In many cases each of the 150 songs begins with a repetition of Gabriel's *Ave*. In other poems the whole of Gabriel's greeting can be deciphered from the first words of the strophes or from the first letters of the verses. Much ingenuity has been expended also in so-called "Glossenlieder" about the Annunciation. For examples of this kind of poems see Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, vol. ii., and *Analecta hymnica*, especially vols. xxx. and xxxv.-xxxviii.

3. For these paintings cf. Garrucci, *Arte Cristiana*, ii. p. 81, and plate lxxv.; Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. p. 11; Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, pp. 290 and 300; Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, pp. 362-367; Schultze, *Archäologie*, pp. 328-329; Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. pp. 151-152; Broussolle, *De la Conception immaculée à l'Annonciation*, pp. 316, 391-392.

4. Cf. Gabelentz, *Die kirchliche Kunst*, p. 98.

5. Cf. Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 156.

6. Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 214; Detzel, *op. cit.* pp. 153-154; Broussolle, *op. cit.* pp. 400 *seq.*

7. Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. pp. 17-18.

8. Andrea del Sarto in the Palazzo Pitti, Francia in the Brera at Milan, Titian in the cathedral at Treviso, Crivelli in the National Gallery in London. These pictures, which are all reproduced in Venturi's *La Madone*, are mentioned as a few examples out of many. Every visitor to the great galleries can here, as in all the following chapters, add new names to those quoted in the text. It has been thought unsuitable to give complete iconographic lists, as such can be without difficulty compiled by the reader from the easily accessible works of Schultz (*Die Legende vom Leben der Jungfrau*), Muñoz (*Iconografia della Madonna*), Reinach (*Répertoire de peintures*), and Grant Allen (*Evolution in Italian Art*).

9. Francesco Rizzo, called Santa Croce, Annunciation (in the museum at Rouen).

10. Catholic piety has, as is well known, imagined that it could identify the actual house in which the Annunciation took place. For a comparison of the legends as to this building, which was moved by angels over the sea to Loretto, see Durand, *Rational*, v. pp. 238-246; Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, pp. 74-75; Broussolle, *op. cit.* pp. 397-398; Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 211-212.

11. Cf. Trombelli, *Sanctae Mariae vita* in Bourassé's *Summa aurea*, i. col. 603; Rohault de Fleury, *La Sainte Vierge*, i. p. 67.

12. Genthe, *Die Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 17-18.

13. For the history of the Angelus prayers see Barfoed, *Altar og Prædikestol*, p. 387; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. p. 432; Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, pp. 221-222; Wetzer-Welte, *Kirchenlexicon*, i. pp. 846 *seq.*

14. Cf. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 215.

15. Cf. *De nativitate Mariae*, cap. ix., "Denique ingressus ad eam cubiculum quidem ubi manebat ingenti lumine perfudit"; Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 119.

16. Genthe, *Die Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 17-18. Cf. also Emmerich, *Leben der heiligen Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 167 *seq.*

17. Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 156; Trombelli, *op. cit.* cols. 472-74; Montault, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 214 *seq.*

18. Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 365.

19. Cf. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 298.

20. Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 446; Detzel, *op. cit.* p. 168.

21. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 286; Nello Tarchiani, *Gli Evangeli apocrifi e l' arte* in Mazzoni's *Esercitazioni*, p. 69.

22. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 217; S. Bernardus, *De adventu Domini Sermo II.*; *Super-Missus est Homilia I.*; *In Annuntiatione Sermo III.* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. cols. 42, 58, and 396).

A poetic revision of S. Bernard's language of flowers is to be found in a rhymed office of the fifteenth century (*Analecta hymnica*, v. p. 65):—

Flos in floris tempore
Ad locum floris mittitur,
Sic de floris corpore
Gloriose concipitur.

Jesu flos, virga Maria,
Verque tempus floris,
Floris Nazareth patria
Plena sunt decoris.

Candens flos multiplicat
Virgulae decorem,
Conceptus glorificat
Mariae pudorem.

23. For the symbolism of the lily cf. Saintyves, *Les Vierges mères*, pp. 73 and 109.

24. Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. pp. 200 *seq.* (quotation from *The Festyvall*, printed at Rouen, by Martin Morin, 1499).

25. *Ibid.* pp. 202-203 (quotation from *Magni speculi exemplorum*). The same legend is told by Jørgensen in *Rejsebogen*, p. 95.

26. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. 216.

27. Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. pp. 284-285; Bergner, *op. cit.* p. 479. Gabriel is described as a letter-carrier in two of Ephraim Syrus's hymns (Translation in Livius, *The Blessed Virgin*, pp. 425 and 438).

28. Bergner, *op. cit.* pp. 542-543; cf. Tikkanen, *Sagan om enhörningen* (*Finsk Tidskrift*, 1898-1899).

29. Cf. the extracts from the writings of the early fathers given by Livius, *op. cit.* pp. 120, 124, and 141.

30. Ambrosius, *Expositio in Lucam* (*Patr. Lat.* xv. col. 1636).

31. Hieronymus, *Epistola* XXII. *ad Eustochium, Paulae filiam* (*Patr. Lat.* xxii. col. 422).

32. Gregorius Thaumaturgos, *Homilia de Annuntiatione*, quoted by Livius, *op. cit.* p. 124.

33. Original text and Latin translation, Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. col. 594.

34. Cf. *e.g.* S. Bernard, *Homiliae super Missus est* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. col. 57).

35. Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. pp. 31-32.

36. Cf. note 1 to Chap. XII.

37. The comparison between Mary and Eve is one of the most frequently occurring *loci communes* in Patristic literature. See the extracts given by Lehner, *op. cit. passim*, and Livius, *op. cit. passim*.

38. For the symbolism concealed in *Eva's* name and Gabriel's *Ave* see Durand, *Rational*, iii. pp. 24-25. It is impossible to quote more than a small selection of

the innumerable poems in which this symbolism has been expressed. The best-known example occurs in the famous *Ave maris stella* :—

. . .

Strophe 2. Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore
Funda nos in pace
Mutans Evae nomen.

That the *ave* removes men from *vae* is expressed still more clearly in a gloss to this hymn (*Anal. hymn.* xix. p. 22) :—

Sumens illud ave
Nos emundans a vae
Confer onus leve
Bona cuncta posce.

And in the following polite playing with words :—

Vae mutasti, nam fugasti
Evae matrimonium,
Dum portasti et lactasti
Summi patris filium.
(*Anal. hymn.* xxxii. p. 29.)

And

Nostrum vae per ave tollis,
Nomen Evae dum revolvis
Gabriele nuntio.
(*Anal. hymn.* xxxi. p. 139.)

In a thirteenth-century sequence (printed by Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 200) it is said that Mary changed the cry of the mourners :—

. . . .

Tibi dicant omnes Ave
Quia mundum tollis a vae,
Mutasti vocem flentium.

The same lines form the first stanza of a fifteenth-century sequence (*Anal. hymn.* xxxiv. p. 126).

To understand this assertion, one should know that according to mediaeval ideas all children of men begin their lives by lamenting the sin of their forefathers. The boys immediately after birth shriek *a-a* in memory of *A*dam, while the girls with *e-e* grieve over the sufferings brought upon them by the first woman. (Innocentius III., *De contemptu mundi* ; *Patr. Lat.* ccxvii. col. 705.) After the promise of salvation had been given to Mary, however, men could cry out in their despair the hopeful *Ave* instead of the lamenting capitals *e* and *a*, and thus the *vox flentium* has undergone an alteration both in its outer and inner meaning.

In some poems *Ave* is actually used as a name for Mary :—

Per te nunc Evae taedia
Sint nobis oblata,
Tu Eva transversata
Mutans luctum in gaudium,
Ex hoc Ave vocata.
(*Anal. hymn.* xxx. p. 233.)

The contrast between Eva and Ave was developed in detail by Gautier de Coincy in his *Les Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, pp. 737 *seq.*

39. Reproductions in Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. pls. iv. and viii.

40. Cf. the manuscript illustrations from the ninth and tenth centuries, reproduced in Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* i. pls. vi. and vii.

41. Cf. the reliefs from the cathedral at Barga and the church of S. Bartolomeo at Pistoja, reproduced by Venturi, *op. cit.* pp. 144-145. This warding off is expressed most dramatically when Mary, with a powerful movement, stretches out her left hand on a level with her head. Cf. the relief on the font in S. Giovanni in Fonte at Verona (beginning of twelfth century) reproduced in Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 142.

42. Capitals on the façade at Poitiers, Rohault de Fleury, *op. cit.* pl. vii. Giovanni Pisano's pulpit in S. Andrea at Pistoja.

43. Cf. *e.g.* Fra Angelico's Annunciation pictures in S. Marco at Florence, Piero dei Franceschi's picture in the Pinacoteca at Perugia, Filippo Lippi's picture in the National Gallery, and Perugino's fresco in Montefalco.

44. Simone di Martino in the Uffizi, Donatello in S. Croce, and Ghirlandajo in S. Maria Novella—all at Florence.

45. Botticelli, in the Uffizi.

46. Tintoretto, Scuola di S. Rocco at Venice.

47. Lotto, S. Maria sopra Mercanti at Recanati (reproduced in Reinach, *Répertoire*, ii. p. 50).

48. Paolo Veronese, in the Uffizi.

49. Titian, in the cathedral at Treviso.

50. Cf. *e.g.* the extracts from Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de Jesuscrist*, reproduced in Hultman's *Guillaume de Deguileville*, pp. 169-170.

51. For the erotic conception held by the mediaeval poets of the relationship between God and Mary cf. Küchenthal, *Die Mutter Gottes*, p. 44. Even in so ecclesiastical a work as Bonaventura's (?) Psalter, it is expressly said that it was Mary's beauty which drew God down from Heaven:—

> Speciem tuam et decorem tuum
> Altissimi filius concupiscit.
>
> BONAVENTURE, *Psautier*, p. 105 (Psaume xlix.).

This conception has received its most poetical expression in the idea that Mary's beauty, like the perfume of a flower, went up to Heaven to draw the Son down to a marriage with human flesh. Thus it is sung in a sequence from an old French missal:—

> Tu rosa, tu lilium
> Cujus Dei filium
> Carnis ad connubium
> Traxit odor.
>
> GUÉRANGER, *L'Année liturgique*, iv. p. 354.

52. The comparison between Mary and the Shunammite Abisag is met with in numerous pious songs. For curious instances see *Analecta hymnica*, v. p. 60; xxxii. pp. 11 and 160; xxxvi. p. 12.

In a Swedish song-cycle on the joys of Mary, *Medeltidsdikter*, pp. 172 *seq.* (Sv. Fornskr. Sällsk. Saml.), we read:—

> Thu äst the sama konung davitis
> the vänaste Abisag Sunamitis
> thz war een utwald skön iomfru
> mz henne wilde konungen hafwa sin roo.

53. Cf. *e.g.* Konrad von Würzburg, *Die goldene Schmiede*, and the passages from mediaeval German poetry quoted by Wilhelm Grimm in his introduction to that poem, pp. xxix-xxx. We find the Phoenix recognised even in early Christian literature as a symbol of the Resurrection and the renewal of life, but the analogy between Mary and the pyre probably dates from the Middle Ages. Cf. Ebert, *Literatur des Mittelalters*, i. pp. 94 *seq.*, iii. pp. 77 *seq.*

54. The most naïve expression of this idea occurs in the 21st of Theodoricus Petri's *Cantiones piae et antiquae*, p. 31 (reproduced in Klemming, *Piae cantiones*, ii. p. 40; and in Woodward, *Piae cantiones*, p. 167):—

Paranymphus adiens
Virginem laetanter
Verbum summi nuntians
Nymphale gratanter.

The old Finnish translation dots the *i* by frankly letting Gabriel convey a love-greeting to Mary:—

Puhemies tuli taevahast,
Tyghö nuoren neidzyisen;
Herrald ilmoitt ihanast
Cosiosanan suloisen.

(*Wanhain Suomen maan Piispain laulud*, p. 2.)

As is well known, it has been proved that many of the *Piae cantiones*, which were all supposed to have been written in Finland, recur in early mediaeval MSS. from Germany, France, and Bohemia. Cf. Lagerborg, "Vår äldsta konstdiktning" in *Förhandlingar och Uppsatser* 20 (*Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland*). Also the poem quoted here is found—it was Chevalier's *Repertorium hymnologicum* which first directed our attention to it—in a foreign collection. It is reproduced in Dreves's *Cantiones Bohemicae* (*Anal. hymn.* i. p. 83; cf. also Woodward, *op. cit.* p. 260). The text given there, however, differs in one important respect from the edition of the *Piae cantiones*:—

Paranymphus adiit
Virginem laetanter,
Verbum summi nuntians
Nymphulae gratanter.

If Dreves's reading is the correct one, it is due to a change of *a* for *u* (nymph*a*le for nymph*u*lae) that the idea of a love-message has been introduced into religious poetry.

In the later mediaeval pictures Gabriel is often a handsome young man, who smiles at the Virgin with an almost arch confidence. Such a graceful-erotic interpretation, however, conflicts openly with the religious point of view. The conception of the Annunciation could, without the subject losing its lofty import, borrow features from the ideas of the mystery of human existence, but there is nothing religious in those works of art in which the angel's visit to Mary has been the subject of merely gay and graceful compositions.

CHAPTER XV

1. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, p. 336.
2. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, pp. 77 *seq.*

3. Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, pp. 34 *seq.*; Lucius, *Heiligenkult*, p. 427; Livius, *The Blessed Virgin*, passim.

4. Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. p. 570; Livius, *op. cit.* p. 428.

5. Gaudentius, translated in Livius, *op. cit.* p. 216.

6. Coelius Sedulius, in the famous hymn, *A solis ortus cardine*. In some editions, as *Patr. Lat.* xix. col. 764, and Clément, *Carmina e poetis Christianis excerpta*, the last verse runs: *Virgo* creavit filium.

7. Ennodius, *Hymnus sanctae Mariae* (*Anal. hymn.* l. p. 67).

8. Venantius Fortunatus, *Opera* (*Patr. Lat.* lxxxviii. col. 265).

9. In Chevalier's *Repertorium hymnologicum* no less than seven separate songs are given which begin with these lines. In the supplement to Chevalier's work the list is increased by five more.

10. Gautier, in a note to Adam de S. Victor, *Œuvres*, ii. p. 215.

11 Cf. a poem of Guido de Basoches, printed in Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. p. 35; also an anonymous song, *ibid.* p. 39.

In Paulus Diaconus's assumption-hymn, "Quis possit amplo famine praepotens," we read:—

Strophe 5 . . . . .
Verbo tumescit latior aethere
Alvus replentem saecula continens.
Anal. hymn. l. p. 123, and xiv.A p. 108.

A sequence to Mary, discovered in a fourteenth-century manuscript, expresses itself still more unreservedly:—

. . .
Virgo dulcis Maria
E coelo salutatur
Et verbo fecundatur
Quis praesentit illa.
Anal. hymn. ix. p. 75.

12. Pfannenschmid, *Die Geiszler des Jahres 1349*, in Runge, *Die Lieder und Melodien der Geiszler*, p. 164.

13. S. Bernardus, *Sermo II. in festo Pentecostes* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. col. 327. Abridged quotation in Hofmann, *op. cit.* p. 77).

14. Cf. the quotations from the sermons of Zeno and Ephraim given by Livius, *op. cit.* pp. 206 and 99, and Lehner, *op. cit.* p. 34.

15. Ambrosius, *Hymnus IV.* ("Veni, redemptor gentium"), str. 2:—

Non ex virili semine,
Sed mystico spiramine,
Verbum Dei factum caro,
Fructusque ventris floruit.
Patr. Lat. xvi. col. 1473.

Cf. also *Anal. hymn.* xxxii. p. 141, "Ave, flatu concepisti"; and v. p. 58:—

Aura sancti spiritus
Crescit venter coelitus
Nulli viro cognitus.

16. Schneegans, *Die italienishen Geiszlerlieder*, in Runge, *op. cit.* p. 84.

17. *Ibid.* p. 85.

18. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iv. p. 72.

19. Cf. Saintyves, *Les Vierges mères*, ch. iv. (Fécondations météorologiques); Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, i. pp. 136 and 180; Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, pp. 218-219.

20. Schneegans, in Runge, *op. cit.* p. 85.

21. Birgitta, *op. cit.* i. p. 28.

22. Mechthild von Magdeburg, *Offenbarungen*, pp. 116-117.

23. Cornelius a Lapide, *Les Trésors*, ed. by l'abbé Barbier, iii. p. 143.

24. Heinrich von Loufenberg, *Die Wunder der Menschwerdung Gottes*, reprinted in Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, ii. p. 530.

25. Cf. Schück, *Världslitteraturens historia*, ii. p. 114.

26. The predominant place occupied by the rain, the dew, and the moisture as symbols of blessing is shown by the following passages: Genesis xxvii. 28; Numbers xxiv. 7; Deut. xxxii. 2; 2 Sam. i. 21; 1 Kings viii. 35; Prov. xix. 12; Isaiah xii. 3, xix. 5, xxvi. 19, xxvii. 3, xxix. 23, xxxii. 2, xxxv. 7, xli. 18, xliv. 3, xlv. 8, xlviii. 20, xlix. 10, lv. 10, lviii. 11; Jeremiah ii. 13, iii. 3, xiv. 22, xvii. 8; Hosea vi. 3, xiv. 6; Joel ii. 23; Acts xiv. 17; Jude v. 12.

27. Cf. the chapter on prayer and grace in S. Teresa's *Vida*, summarised in Graham, *Santa Teresa*, ii. pp. 207-208; and Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part I. (Christian with the Interpreter).

28. La Bouillerie, *Symbolisme de la nature*, i. pp. 69 *seq.* The following lines from Adam de S. Victor's sequence to Peter and Paul are significant:—

Hi sunt nubes coruscantes,
Terram cordis irrigantes
Nunc rore, nunc pluvio.

For a detailed criticism see Gautier, *Œuvres d'Adam de S. Victor*, ii. p. 49; and Misset, *Les Proses d'Adam de S. Victor*, p. 101.

29. Cf. the quotations from patristic literature given in Lehner, *op. cit.* p. 32.

30. Cornelius a Lapide, *Les Trésors*, iii. p. 203.

31. Cf. Durand, *Rational*, iii. pp. 166-167, v. p. 48. Of the poems, in which the Incarnation is compared with the fall of the dew or the rain on the earth, it is sufficient to cite a few examples. In one of the Pseudo-Ambrosian hymns the text already quoted is paraphrased thus:—

. . . .
Rorem dederunt aethera
Nubesque justum fuderunt,
Patens accepit Dominum,
Terra salutem generans.

GUÉRANGER, *L'Année liturgique*, ii. 2. p. 232.

The analogy between the fruitfulness of the earth and of the Virgin is ingeniously expressed in the poem "Res est admirabilis" (Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 78, *Anal. hymn.* xxxi. p. 141):—

Strophe 3. Sicut ros in gramine
Descendit in virgine
Verbum summi patris,
Patrem non deseruit
Et mortalem induit
Formam alvo matris.

Sicut terram pluvia,
Sic divina gratia
Virginem fecundat,
Sanctus eam spiritus
A peccato penitus
Abluit et mundat.

In a "Jubilus S. Bernardi Abbatis," which, however, is not included in any collection of Bernard's poems, the unknown bard exclaims :—

Salve, mater castitatie,
Nec adhaeres nuntiatis,
Donec certa fieres,
Salve virginali flore,
Quod coelesti fusa rore,
Filium conciperes.

MONE, *op. cit.* ii. p. 280.

32. Clerc, *Psaumes*, ii. p. 23.

33. Cornelius a Lapide, *op. cit.* iii. p. 203.

34. According to the Vulgate, Ps. lxxi.

35. Cf. Buhl, *Psalmerne*, pp. 465 and 468.

36. *Jungfru Marie örtagård* (ed. Svenska Fornskr. Sällsk.), pp. 98-99, 228. Cf. also Ivo Carnotensis, *Sermones* (*Patr. Lat.* clxii. col. 536).

37. Johannes der Mönch von Salzburg, *Uterus virgineus* (printed in Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, ii. p. 453).

38. Hugo de S. Victor, *Allegoriae in Vetus Test.* lib. iv. cap. ii. *Patr. Lat.* clxxv. col. 678 (quoted by Gautier, *Œuvres d'Adam de S. Victor*, ii. p. 132).

39. La Broise, *La Sainte Vierge*, p. 24. The same thought is expressed in a poem ascribed to Abelard :—

. . . .
Sicut vellus maduit
De coelesti rore,
Sic venter intumuit
Servato pudore.
Nec vellus corrumpitur
Imbre pluviali,
Nec pudor amittitur
In conceptu tali.
. . . .

ROHAULT DE FLEURY, *La Vierge*, i. p. 46.

Neither by Migne nor Dreves is the poem included among Abelard's writings.

40. Lecanu, *Histoire de la Sainte Vierge*, p. 74; Auber, *Histoire du symbolisme*, ii. p. 88.

41. Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp*, p. 144.

42. Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. p. 744; cf. also *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, p. 68.

43. Ambrosius, *Homilia XV.*, quoted by Cornelius a Lapide, *op. cit.* iii. p. 203.

44. *Medeltidsdikter*, p. 71.

45. Mechthild, *Offenbarungen*, p. 15.

46. Song of the time of Henry VI., printed by Shipley, *Carmina Mariana*, p. 60.

47. Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. p. 11, and pl. ii.

48. Taddeo di Bartolo in the Accademia at Siena; Simone Martini in the Uffizi at Florence.

49. Piero dei Franceschi in S. Francesco at Arezzo; Lorenzo Lotto in S. Maria sopra Mercanti at Recanati; Mariotto Albertinelli in the Galleria antica e moderna at Florence; Antoniazzo Romano in the Lateran Museum at Rome; and in S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome.

50. Fra Angelico in the Prado at Madrid; Filippo Lippi in the Doria Gallery at Rome.

51. Benedetto Bonfigli in the Palazzo del Commune at Perugia.

52. Glass-painting in the Benedictine Church at Freising; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 479.

53. Crivelli in the National Gallery at London; Andrea del Sarto in the Uffizi.

54. It is useless to enumerate all the numberless pictures in which the dove and the Christ-child descend upon the Virgin. A rich selection of reproductions is given in Reinach's *Répertoire*. Cf. also Grant Allen, *Evolution in Italian Art*. An exception to the time-honoured arrangement is made in Domenico Panetti's Annunciation in the Pinacoteca at Ferrara, in which, contrary to all pious descriptions, the Son heads the procession of the Trinity to Mary. Timoteo della Vite (in the Brera at Milan) makes the "putto" float down on the back of the dove.

55. Cf. Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. pp. 115 and 216. A curious allegorising of the doctrine that the Saviour's earthly being was formed of elements from Mary's body is found in the 64th chapter of *Gesta Romanorum* (Keller's ed. pp. 100, 101).

56. Cf. *e.g.* Bruder Hansen's *Marienlieder*, p. 295:—

O flammerende morghenstern,
Got ist eyn kerz, du eyn lucern;
Du bis die nus, her is die kern.

CHAPTER XVI

1. Cf. Andrea della Robbia's Annunciation on the wall of the Ospedale degli Innocenti at Florence. The same attitudes are found in Fra Angelico's Annunciation in S. Marco at Florence. These two are the most famous of the many works in which the Virgin and the angel kneel to one another. Mary's prayer-desk often forms the centre of the composition.

2. Cf. Andrea del Sarto in the Palazzo Pitti at Florence, Spinello Aretino in S. Annunziata at Arezzo, and Filippo Lippi in the Pinakothek at Munich. Numerous examples are given by Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. p. 167.

3. Detzel, *op. cit.* p. 168.

4. Cf. *e.g.* the poem "Thalamus beatae Mariae Virginis" (*Analecta hymnica*, xxxi. p. 137):—

Strophe 1.

O quam pulchrum thalamum,
Jesu, construxisti,
In sole tabernaculum
Tuum posuisti,
Quod virtutum floribus
Undique sparsisti,
Quando novem mensibus
Ibi quievisti.

5. Examples of these similes will be given in Chapter XXII. of this work.

6. For information about this kind of Mary-pictures see Otte, *Handbuch*, ii. p. 901; Schultz, *Legende vom Leben der Jungfrau*, p. 57; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. p. 287; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 480 (Ivory statuettes, glass-paintings, wooden statues, tapestries and pictures from various places in Germany); Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. pp. 115, 219-220, 225; Broussolle, *De la Conception à l'Annonciation*, p. 344, and *De la Visitation à la Passion*, pp. 50 and 69; Witkowski, *Les Accouchements dans les beaux-arts*, etc., pp. 15-16 (Glass-paintings, bas-relief, statues, and pictures in France); Pächinger, *Die Mutterschaft in der Malerei*, pp. 22-34.

In a wooden group of the Visitation, from Lappi Church, now preserved in the Raumo Museum, the embryo is represented on Mary's body (photograph in the Historical Museum at Helsingfors, description in Meinander, *Altarskåp*, p. 309). In Salo Church, near Brahestad, in an Annunciation painted in 1641, the embryo is seen in Mary's womb (Aspelin, *Suomalaisen taiteen historia*, p. 35).

7. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 220. As it is only the Second Person of the Trinity that was incarnated in the Virgin's womb, these pictures have been regarded as heretical. Gerson is even said to have had destroyed, in the interests of the true faith, a picture of Mary with a representation of the Trinity within her. The words of greeting, "Salve Mater pietatis, Et totius trinitatis Nobile triclinium," occur in a poem of Adam de S. Victor (*Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Gautier, ii. p. 192). They serve as the inscription for Fra Angelico's great Annunciation fresco in S. Marco at Florence.

8. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 220 (two ivory statues in the Louvre and the Lyons Museum). Curiously enough, the French author does not mention the great "vierge ouvrante" which is still preserved in Notre Dame du Mur at Morlaix.

9. Cf. *Analecta hymnica*, xv. p. 113. Super "Magnificat" (Ave, nostra spes in vita):—

Portasti regem gloriae
Nil habens anxietatis,
Manente pudicitia
Floreque virginitatis.

Also, *Anal. hymn.* xxxiv. p. 73 (Gaude, virgo mater Christi):—

. . . .

Partus tuus partus laetus,
Non in partu tuo fletus,
Nullus moeror, nullus metus,
Dum portasti filium.

See also p. 197 in the preceding; also Meyer, *Handbuch der neutesta-*

mentlichen Apokryphen, p. 125, for the way in which the legends, in the story of the journey to Bethlehem, describe Mary's feelings during her pregnancy.

10. Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita*, in Bourassé, *Summa*, i. cols. 701 *seq.*

11. S. Bernard, *In dominica infra octavam Assumptionis sermo* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. col. 431).

12. *Paroissien complet selon l'usage de Paris et de Rome*, p. 599.

13. *Anal. hymn.* xvi. p. 50 ("Generosa virgo surgens").

14. Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. p. 171.

15. Faber, *Our Lady and the Eucharist*, p. 26.

16. Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 174; Broussolle, *De la Visitation*, etc., pp. 46 and 66 (quotation from a visitation sermon by Bossuet, in which Mary is compared with the Church and Elizabeth with the Synagogue).

17. Witkowski (*Les Accouchements dans les beaux-arts*, pp. 10-12) points out that, as a rule, the artists represented Mary's condition as further advanced than Elizabeth's. He specially cites Zeitblom's picture in the Stuttgart Gallery, the pictures of Raphael and Giulio Romano in the Prado at Madrid, and Rubens's great picture of the Visitation in Notre Dame at Antwerp.

It is, it seems, the blessed woman in both senses of the term that men desired to do homage to in pictures of the Visitation.

18. *Anal. hymn.* xlviii. pp. 421 *seq.*, rhymed office for the Visitation Festival, composed by Johannes a Jenstein, Archbishop of Prague (†1400). The words quoted in the text occur in the 5th strophe of the fourteenth poem ("Assunt festa jubilaea"):—

Sacri junguntur uteri,
Milesque, sui Domini
Praesentiam dum percipit,
Hunc exultando suscipit.

The same poem is printed without information as to the authorship in Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. p. 116.

Among the poetic descriptions of the embrace of the pious women, the following also deserves a place—*Anal. hymn.* x. p. 76, *De Visitatione B.M.V.* ("Ave, praegnans admiranda"):—

Strophe 6, b. Junguntur uteri
Matrum et pueri
Se salutantium.

O quam suavis amplexus
Matrum, quarum idem nexus
Conjungit et filios!

Quorum unus est salvator,
Alter verbi praedicator
Docens ore alios.

19. Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, p. 336; Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. pp. 20 *seq.*; Kraus, *op. cit.* i. pp. 188-189 (about the now destroyed fresco in S. Valentino at the Via Flaminia outside Rome); Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 197 (for the relief on the chair of Maximianus at Ravenna cf. Garrucci, *Storia*, vi. p. 18); Broussolle, *De la Visitation*, etc., pp. 22-57 (Ampulla at Monza, chest in the Louvre, MSS. illustrations, sarcophagus at Ravenna, etc.). The last-named work should, according to Garrucci, *op. cit.* v. p. 71, be interpreted as a representation of Mary's and Joseph's marriage.

20. Bas-relief of the twelfth century (reproduced in Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 197). Elizabeth laying her hand on Mary's waist is a motive also met with in pictures from an earlier date, *e.g.* on the chancel reliefs in Notre Dame at Paris.

21. Cf. especially the great statues at Reims, Amiens, and Chartres.

22. Cf. Benedictus XIV. *De D.N. Jesu Christi matrisque ejus festis*, p. 275; Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 176; Broussolle, *De la Visitation, etc.*, p. 52.

23. Ghirlandajo in S. Maria Novella at Florence, Carpaccio in the Museo Correr at Venice, Sebastian del Piombo in the Louvre.

24. Mariotto Albertinelli in the Uffizi.

25. Ambrosius advances it as a proof of Mary's humility that she who was younger indeed, but who stood higher in rank, hastened to the assistance of the older woman (*Expositio in Lucam*; *Patr. Lat.* xv. col. 1641), quoted in Broussolle, *De la Visitation, etc.*, p. 52).

26. *Little Children's Little Book*, printed in "Publications of the Early English Text Society," Original Series, xxxii. p. 265 (quoted in Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry*, p. 74).

How vividly the idea of Mary's and Elizabeth's mutual greetings was realised appears from the fact that the French sawyers celebrated the Visitation festival as a holiday, because the holy women had bowed to one another in the same way as two workmen who cleave a plank (Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e^ siècle*, p. 335).

27. Cf. some glass-paintings and pictures at Lyons, described by Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 225; and Witkowski, *op. cit.* p. 15.

28. Faber, *Our Lady and the Eucharist*, pp. 34 *seq.*

CHAPTER XVII

1. Rabelais probably wished to parody the doctrine of the Incarnation when he made Gargantua be born through his mother's ear.

2. Georgius Pisida (the poem is ascribed to this writer by Migne), "Hymnus acathistus," *Patrologia Graeca*, xcii. coll. 1335-1348, especially col. 1343.

3. Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, p. 39; Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, pp. 123 *seq.*

4. Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 41.

5. Lehner, *op. cit.* pp. 126 *seq.* (quotations from Zeno of Verona, Ephraim Syrus, Basilius, etc.).

6. Ambrosius, *De institutione Virginis* (*Patr. Lat.* xvi. col. 234). Cf. also the pseudo-Ambrosian hymn "A solis ortus cardine," *Patr. Lat.* xvii. col. 1210.

7. Herzog, *op. cit.* pp. 45 *seq.*; Lehner, *op. cit.* pp. 136 *seq.*; Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, pp. 427 *seq.*

8. Hieronymus, *Epistola* 48, *Ad Pammachium, pro libris contra Jovinianum* (*Patr. Lat.* xxii. col. 510). Some editors read "purissima petra," others "durissima."

9. S. Ephraim Syrus, *Opera*, ed. Assemani, v. pp. 422-423 (Sermo 8, "De nativitate Domini"), cf. p. 412; *Carmina Nisibena*, ed. Bickell, p. 150 ("Hymnus de Domino nostro et de morte et diabolo"); *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. p. 570.

10. *Patr. Lat.* xvii. col. 1245 ("Rex sempiterne coelitum").

11. Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, p. 459.

12. Interian de Ayala, *El Pintor cristiano y erudito*, ii. pp. 156 *seq.*; W. Meyer, "Wie ist die Auferstehung Christi dargestellt worden?" in *Nachrichten d. K. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Classe*, 1903, pp. 236 *seq.*; and "Fragmenta Burana," in *Festschrift zum 150j. Bestehen der Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen*, p. 61.

13. *The History of the Blessed Virgin*, Syriac texts with English translations, p. 91.

14. S. Ephraim Syrus, *Opera*, ed. Assemani, v. p. 422.

15. Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. pp. 471 and 481.

16. In the art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries some separate pictures have been found of the Resurrection itself (cf. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 229).

17. Mâle (*op. cit.* p. 229) points out that according to ancient explanations of the Gospel the stone in front of Christ's grave represents the stone tablet on which the old laws of the covenant were inscribed. It covered the Saviour in the same way as in the Old Testament the letter concealed the spirit, but when Jesus arose the Law had to give place to the Gospel. Thus it was possible to introduce a theological idea into the pictures in which the lid of the grave lies cast off by the grave-side.

A further justification of these compositions could be found in the fact—likewise pointed out by Mâle, *op. cit.* p. 177—that according to Christian typology the Resurrection was foreshadowed by the miracle of Samson when he lifted up the gates of his prison at Gaza and carried them up to the mountains; cf. *e.g.* Adam de S. Victor's Resurrection hymn ("Zyma vetus expurgetur"), *Œuvres*, ed. Gautier, i. p. 90. Ingenious as these explanations are, Mâle, in his later work, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 50 *seq.*, has left them quite unemployed. Through his own, and earlier by Wilhelm Meyer's important researches, it has been proved more surely than ever before how intimately the religious theatre influenced pictorial art. It can even be shown easily that the earlier Easter dramas treat only of the demonstration of the miracle, *i.e.* the visit of the women to the grave; while the theatre of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries ventured to allow an actor to represent the Risen Saviour Himself. On all these questions cf. Cohen, *Histoire de la mise en scène*, pp. 115 *seq.*

18. W. Meyer, "Wie ist die Auferstehung dargestellt?" p. 249.

19. Resurrection pictures in which the red unbroken seal is, with clear intention, exposed to view, are especially common in German art. In the old Pinakothek at Munich many examples of this type of picture are to be found.

20. Cf. the sarcophagus reliefs reproduced in Garrucci, *Storia*, v.

21. Springer, "Quellen der Kunstdarstellungen im Mittelalter," *Ber. d. Verh. d. sächs. Ges. d. Wiss.* xxxi. pp. 36 *seq.*; Mansberg, *Dasz hohe liet von der maget*, pp. 29-30; Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 181. Strauss (*Das Leben Jesu*, p. 155) thinks that the representation of the seal on Jesus' grave was borrowed from the narrative of Daniel and the lions' den.

In a sequence from *Missale Upsaliense* (Klemming, *Piae cantiones*, pp. 145-146) the lions' den is compared to Mary's womb:—

Danielque massam cibi
Suscipit immissam sibi;
Intrat massa claustrum ibi
Clausum habens aditum.

Verbum patris plus potenter
Concipit et parit venter,
Gravidata tam decenter
Per umbrantem spiritum.

22. Herzog, *op. cit.* p. 47.
23. *Ibid.* p. 48.
24. Fortunatus, *De Leontio episcopo* (*Patr. Lat.* lxxxviii. col. 79).
25. *Anal. hymn.* xlviii. p. 263.
26. Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. p. 63 ("Salve, porta chrystallina").
27. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. p. 3.
28. Durand, *Rational*, i. p. 311 (Barthélemy's notes).
29. Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, vi. p. 520 (the song "Der Tag der ist so Freudenreich"). Cf. Wernher, *Driu Liet von der Maget*, p. 62, and the Swedish poem-cycle on Mary's Seven Joys (*Medeltidsdikter*, p. 57):—

Så föddes af dig, o jungfru ren
Guds son ihesus utan smitta och men
Rätt så som solen skiner igenom det glas
Som helt och klart och fagert är.

30. *Bruder Hansens Marienlieder*, pp. xviii. and 98.
31. Meyer in *Handbuch zu den Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, p. 127.
32. As it appears, the Protestant translation does not correspond with the Vulgate in the matter of the phrase "*In* sole posuit tabernaculum suum," which had so great an importance in regard to Catholic monstrance and Madonna symbolism.
33. Ambrosius, *In nativitate Domini* ("Veni, redemptor gentium"), quoted according to Clément, *Carmina e poetis Christianis excerpta*, p. 48.
34. Augustine, *Confessiones*, lib. iv. cap. 12; Leo IX., "In vigilia Nativitatis Domini," in *Anal. hymn.* l. p. 304 ("Egredere, Emmanuel").
35. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale* in *Patr. Lat.* xix. col. 597.
36. Hofmann, *Das Leben Jesu nach den Apokryphen*, p. 109.
37. "Le maître de Flémalle's" picture at Dijon may be cited as one of the most characteristic examples of this kind of Nativity picture.
38. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 45; *Ett fornsvenskt legendarium*, i. p. 69.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. It is not part of our purpose to give a complete account of the treatment of the birth of Jesus by poets and painters. In the histories of literature and art this matter has been the subject of detailed investigations. Thus, to give a single instance, it has been shown how the apocryphal gospels and the local traditions of Bethlehem led to the sacred event being made to take place in a cave or a shed, and not in an ordinary stable. Many interesting theories have even been represented about the two animals—the ox and the ass—which, according to the legends and pictures, warm the little Child with their breath. All these questions, however, have no immediate connection with the pictures of the Madonna. We therefore put them aside, in order to limit our attention to those features of the Nativity-motive which bear upon the ideas of Mary's pure virginity and high motherhood.

2. Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. p. 181.

3. Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 219.

4. Detzel, *op. cit.* p. 183; Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 221; Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. pp. 43 *seq.*; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la légende dorée*, pp. 43 *seq.*; Rietschel, *Weihnachten*, pp. 22 *seq.*

5. Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita* in Bourassé, *Summa*, i. col. 766 *seq.*

6. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. pp. 127 *seq.* That it is the water which is purified by contact with the Saviour's body is often pointed out in speaking of Baptism. Crashaw has composed two epigrams on this idea (*Poems*, pp. 30 and 73):—

> Felix o, sacros cui sic licet ire per artus!
> Felix! dum lavat hunc, ipsa lavatur aqua.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Each blest drop, on each blest limme,
> Is wash't it self, in washing Him:
> 'Tis a gemme while it stayes here,
> While it falls hence, 'tis a teare.

7. Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 44.

8. G. de S. Laurent, *op. cit.* iv. p. 127.

9. Hieronymus, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae* (*Patr. Lat.* xxiii. cols. 201 and 212), quoted in Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 248.

10. Zeno Veronensis († about 380), *De nativitate Domini*, ii. (*Patr. Lat.* xi. col. 414), quoted in Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, p. 126. The translation is not quite verbal.

11. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 344; *Vita Christi*, fol. vii. *verso.*

12. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. pp. 280-287.

13. Mechthild, *Offenbarungen*, pp. 260-261; *Revelationes Gertrudianae et Mechtildianae*, ii. p. 458.

14. This excuse is cited even by Molanus, who otherwise corrects the unconscious heresy of artists with unflinching severity (*De historia sacrarum imaginum*, pp. 436 *seq.*).

15. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, pp. 248 *seq.*; and *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 34 *seq.* The two nurses are retained in thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian art, but disappear from thirteenth-century French painting, to return after 1380.

16. Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende Dorée*, p. 39.

17. Ephraim Syrus, *Opera*, ed. Assemani, Syriace et latine, ii. p. 416, quoted in Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i. p. 256.

18. Cf. *e.g.* the Italian "lauda" ascribed to Jacopone da Todi:—

> . . . . .
>
> Quando tu 'l partoristi senza pena
> La prima cosa, credo, che facesti
> Si l' adorasti, o di grazia plena.
>
> . . . . .

Quoted according to Maffii, *Lo svolgimento della lauda lirica* in Mazzoni, *Esercitazioni*, p. 167.

19. Cf. Rothes, *Darstellungen des Fra Angelico*, p. 20.

20. Cf. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 271.

21. According to Catholic belief this woman was Marta's servant, Saint Marcella (Baring Gould, *Lives of the Saints*, viii. p. 616).

22. Cf. *En syndares omvändelse*, the oldest known dramatic poem in Swedish. *Svenska medeltidsdikter och rim*, pp. 122-136, ll. 290 *seq.*, describe how Mary calls on the Saviour for grace for the sinner's soul.

In the French miracle plays many similar scenes occur; cf. *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, i. pp. 49 and 33.

See also Goffridus Vindocinensis († 1132), *Oratio ad Matrem Domini. Analecta hymnica*, l. p. 405 (O Maria gloriosa) :—

Strophe 14.

Qui assumpsit ex te carnem,
Exaudiet tuam precem ;
Nihil tibi denegabit
Quem mamilla tua pavit.

23. This type of picture is represented in Finland by the "Last Judgment" in Lojo Church.

24. Cf. Beda, *In natali sanctae Dei genitricis. Anal. hymn.* l. p. 110 (Adesto, Christe, vocibus) :—

Strophe 5.

Beata cujus ubera
Summo repleta munere
Terris alebant unicam
Terrae polique gloriam.

From the foregoing strophes it appears that this homage is directed to Mary, and not, as might be concluded from the title of the poem, to Saint Anne.

Rabanus Maurus, *Hymnus de natali Domini, Anal. hymn.* l. p. 187 (Lumen clarum rite fulget) :—

Strophe 9.

Quae divisit lucem ab umbris
Summi primum dextera,
Matris mammas, ecce, tractat
Lactis potum quaesitans.

Os praeclarum conditoris
Quod formavit saeculum,
En, admotum nunc libenter
Sugit matris ubera.

Bernardus Morlanensis, *Mariale. Rhythmus V., Anal. hymn.* l. p. 432 (Mater Christi, quae tulisti) :—

Strophe 13.

Tu portasti et lactasti
Benedicta domina,
Quem adorat, quem honorat
Mundi trina machina.

Adorabas et lactabas
Deum factum hominem,
Qui nos lavit et salvavit
Suum ponens sanguinem.

The most characteristic of all the praises of Mary's breast are, however, the two poems "De uberibus B. Mariae Virginis," printed in *Anal. hymn.* xxxi. pp. 145-146. The latter is so short that it may be quoted in full :—

Mariae matris mammulae,
Nitentes velut faculae
Lac filio praebentes,
Ardoris sunt scintillulae
Quibus delentur maculae
Odore redolentes.

Velut mala Punicorum
Fragrant, halitus istorum
Fugantes hostem saevum,
Laxant gesta nefandorum,
Stillant nectar per os florum
Salvantes nos per aevum.

Fluunt ut vitis pocula
Currentia per rivula
Summae deitatis.

Cf. also the poems of Petrus Venerabilis in *Anal. hymn.* xlviii. pp. 235-239.

In "Bonaventuras Psalterium" the holy breast is mentioned time after time. Cf. "Symbolum" and Psalms 15, 17, and 22, *Psautier*, pp. 29, 42, 45, and 55.

25. The earliest Christian pictures of a mother suckling a child are met with in the catacombs of Priscilla. The motive is especially common among the Flemish and Milanese painters (Jean Fouquet, Dirk Bouts—Boltraffio, Andrea Solario, etc.).

26. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Manuel de l'art chrétien*, p. 213, and *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iii. pp. 80-83 ; Barbier de Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 227.

27. Jameson, *op. cit.* p. 271.

28. Proclus, *Oratio de laudibus S. Mariae* (*Patrologia Graeca*, lxv. col. 690).

29. Pinicelli, *Symbola Virginea*, reprinted in Bourassé, *Summa*, iii. coll. 1–260 (comparison with "Caritas Romana," col. 95).

30. Mechthild, *Offenbarungen*, pp. 262–263.

31. A symbolic conception of Mary's milk often appears in poetical praises of Mary. Thus we read in some strophes interpolated in Bernardus Morlanensis' *Mariale* (*Anal. hymn.* l. p. 457) :—

Fluat stilla de mamilla
Gloriosae virginis,
Fundat rorem, qui ardorem
Extinguat libidinis.

And *ibid.* p. 471 :—

Lac distilla ex mamilla
Dulci illa labiis,
Ut amicam te pudicam
Verbis dicam sobriis.

In the same way the milk is compared to the dew by Gautier de Coincy (*Miracles*, p. 17) :—

Haute pucele ! pure et monde,
De toi sovit la rousée
Dont as toute la riens du monde
Norrie et arousée.

And by the author of the miracle play "Un pape qui vendi le basme" (*Miracles de Nostre Dame*, i. p. 396) :—

Vierge, du lait de ta mamelle
Nous arouse et de ton doulx miel
Nous adoulcis, dame du ciel,
Par la doulceur de ta pitié
Et par l'ardeur de t'amistié.

32. Mechthild, *op. cit.* pp. 15–19. The idea that the Madonna gives milk to all believers appears finely in a poem in the Swedish collection of Latin hymns, *Piae cantiones*, p. 161 :—

Super vinum et unguentum
tue mamme dant fomentum,
fove, lacta parvulos.

33. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 249.

34. *Ibid.* ii. p. 250.

35. *Ibid.* iii. p. 36.

36. Mechthild, *op. cit.* p. 273.

37. Cf. Mussafia, *Marienlegenden*, i. pp. 28, 40–41, 44, 69 ; ii. p. 75 ; iii. p. 48 ; v. p. 12 ; Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, p. 81 ; Petit de Julleville, *Histoire du théâtre en France*, ii. p. 250.

38. Seuse (=Suso), *Deutsche Schriften*, i. p. 74.

39. Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, xxxviii. pp. 207–208.

40. Murillo's "S. Bernard of Clairvaux" in the Prado at Madrid is the best-known illustration of this scene. A French picture by an unknown painter at Angers is described by Broussolle, *De la Visitation, etc.*, p. 225.

41. *Marias sju fröjder* (*Svenska Medeltidsdikter*, p. 57) :—

O rosin bloma hwat frögdh oc glädhy monde thu faa,
tha thu hans fäghirsta änlite förста sin saa,
Oc lagdhe han ath thino bryste,
Swa lioflika thu han klappadhe oc kyste.

42. Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. col. 542.

43. *Ibid.* col. 554.

44. *Ibid.* col. 622.

45. *Ibid.* col. 564.

46. Thode, *Franz von Assisi*, pp. 451 *seq.*

47. Hase, *Heilige und Propheten* (*Werke*, v. 1), p. 62 ; Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 328 ; Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, p. 213 ; Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, i. pp. 116 *seq.*

48. Ancona, *op. cit.* pp. 112 *seq.*

49. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 5 ; *Vita Christi*, fol. ix. *verso*.

50. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, pp. 220–221 ; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende Dorée*, p. 37 (MSS. illustrations, reliquaries, and altar-piece from Werden).

51. For a rich collection of reproductions see the works of R. de Fleury, Venturi, and Broussolle already referred to.

52. The idea that, even when nursing the tender infant, Mary divined the sufferings the Saviour would have to go through is one frequently expressed in Catholic literature. As an example an extract from *Jungfru Marie örtagård* (p. 109) may be cited : "But after she had conceived and born the Lord, and

saw and touched His holy members, His hands and His feet, she knew, much more [enlightened] by the Holy Ghost than any prophets, that the offer of pains, which are the nails and the spear, would bitterly penetrate His sacred limbs, and in this way her sorrow was always increased."

Dom Guéranger points out (*L'Année liturgique*, II. i. pp. 302–303) that even at the Christmas festival men ought to recall the tears which the mother shed in the foreknowledge that her Son would be a man of sorrows.

Gabriel Vicaire (*Études sur la poésie populaire*, p. 59) quotes a French folk-song, according to which Gabriel announces to Mary the Saviour's destiny :—

L'ange Gabriel,
Descendu de ciel
Auc son p'tit pot de miel
Demande à Marie :
Marie, dormez-vous ?

—Ni j' deurs et ni j' veille,
Je pense toujours
A mon p'tit Jésus.
L'avez-vous point vu ?

—Oui, mort, je l'ai vu,
Attaché en croix,
Ses p'tits pieds cloués,
Ses petit's mains jointes,
Coiffées d'épinettes
Au faîte de sa tête.

This naïve poem deserves to be set beside the by no means naïve late Renaissance pictures, such as Albani's painting in the Uffizi, which represents the Divine Child outstretched upon the ground and nailed to a little cross.

53. For fuller information about the Nativity motive see all the works referred to, and also Sirén, *Dom Lorenzo Monaco*, pp. 135 *seq.*, and *Giotto*, pp. 124 *seq.*

54. Cf. Woermann, *Geschichte der Kunst*, ii. p. 156. For the development of the motive in French art see Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 296 ; *L'Art rel. de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 145 *seq.* Cf. also Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 228.

55. Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 228 ; Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 59. Huysmans (*La Cathédrale*, p. 396) advances the, as it seems, unnecessary and unjustifiable hypothesis that the bird in the hand of the Divine Child refers to the clay figures which, according to the *Book of Childhood*, Jesus had amused Himself by transforming into living birds. It is scarcely necessary to mention that during modern times the conception of the symbolical meanings that were attached to the apple, the grapes, and the birds has gradually died out.

56. Baldovinetti, "Madonna and Child," in the Louvre. The picture was formerly ascribed to Piero dei Franceschi.

57. Crashaw, "On the Blessed Virgin's Bashfulness," *Poems*, p. 76 :—

That on her lap she casts her humble eye,
'Tis the sweet pride of her humilitie.
The fair starre is well fixt, for where, O, where
Could she have fixt it on a fairer spheare ?

'Tis Heaven, 'tis Heaven she sees, Heaven's God there lyes ;
She can see Heaven, and ne'er lift up her eyes ;
This new Guest to her eyes new laws has given,
'Twas once look up, 'tis now looke downe to Heaven.

58. Pictures in which the Madonna rubs her cheek on the Child's head are met with as early as in Byzantine art ; cf. Brockhaus, *Die Kunst in den Athos-klöstern*, p. 107 (on "Panagia Glykophilusa" at Philotea). It was Professor J. J. Tikkanen who called my attention to this fact.

CHAPTER XIX

1. For fuller accounts of the iconographic development which is shortly sketched in the following pages, see Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, i. pp. 56-74 ; Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. pp. 204 *seq.* ; Venturi, *La Madone*, pp. 249 *seq.* ; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende Dorée*, pp. 91-126 ; Hamilton, *Die Darstellung der Anbetung der heiligen drei Könige in der toscanischen Malerei* (*passim*).

2. This symbolisation of the figures of the three kings is already met with in Bede's *Commentary on the Gospels* ; cf. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 252.

3. Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 258.

4. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 2 ; *Vita Christi*, fol. ix. *recto.*

5. Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende Dorée*, p. 51.

6. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, pp. 80 *seq.*

7. Fra Angelico in the Accademia at Florence ; Mantegna in the Uffizi ; Filippo Lippi in the Town-hall at Prato.

8. Barthélemy in a note to Durand, *Rational*, iii. p. 430.

9. The Presentation in the Temple is connected in Catholic liturgy with the Circumcision. This fact has led to the two motives being often confused in pictorial art. Cf. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, p. 215 ; Broussolle, *op. cit.* p. 64.

10. Cf. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iii. pp. 153-154.

11. For the lights at "Candlemas" cf. *e.g.* Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 142.

12. Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 230.

13. In MSS. illustrations, ivory carvings, and other small works of ecclesiastical art, the Madonna was often represented as pierced by a sword which issues from the side of the crucified Saviour. Cf. Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. p. 316 ; Broussolle, *De la Visitation à la Passion*, pp. 385 and 393 ; Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 230.

In Birgitta's *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 134, it is described how the lance in the Saviour's body served to transfix Mary's heart: "ok swa gik stiungit ginom mit hiärta at undir var at the sprak ej."

14. For the devout "Meditation upon Mary's Seven Sorrows" cf. Benedictus XIV. *De D. N. Jesu Christi matrisque ejus festis*, p. 273 ; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 450 ; Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 230 ; Broussolle, *De la Visitation à la Passion*, pp. 332, 338, 341, 402-403 ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 119 *seq.* Usually *seven* important events are distinguished in the Madonna's life ; but often also Mary's *five* joys or sorrows are spoken of, and the number

has sometimes been increased to fifteen. Cf. Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. pp. 161 *seq.*

15. Cf. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 160 *seq.* ; *Analecta hymnica*, xxxi. pp. 171-203 ; *Svenska Medeltidsdikter och rim*, pp. 49-77.

16. Broussolle, *op. cit.* pp. 394 and 426 ; Mâle, *op. cit.* p. 121.

17. The ivory collection at the Louvre contains a fine specimen of these ingenious works.

18. Broussolle, *op. cit.* pp. 393-394 ; Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 230 ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, p. 120.

19. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. 181-209 ; Bäckström, *Svenska folkböcker*, ii. pp. 170 *seq.*

20. *Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium de ortu Mariae et infantia Salvatoris*, cap. xx. in Tischendorf, *op. cit.* p. 87 ; *Vita beate Virginis et Salvatoris rhythmica*, p. 79.

21. A bending tree occurs, *e.g.*, in Giotto's fresco at Assisi, in Baldassare Peruzzi's picture in S. Onofrio at Rome, and in the reliefs in the choir of Notre Dame at Paris. It is possible, however, that we should see in this tree not the palm which slaked Mary's thirst with its fruits, but the peach-tree which bowed to Jesus. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 83 ("De arbore persico que inclinavit se").

22. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 135 ; iii. pp. 3 and 156-158.

23. *Ibid.* iii. pp. 249-250.

24. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 14 ; *Vita Christi*, fol. xi. *recto.*

25. *Betraktelser*, p. 27 ; *Vita Christi*, fol. xiii. *verso*, "Ponit vultum ad vultum."

26. *Ibid.* p. 63 ; *ibid.* fol. xxi. *verso.*

27. *Ibid.* p. 51 ; *ibid.* fol. xvii. *recto.*

28. *Ibid.* pp. 35-36 ; *ibid.* fol. xv. *verso.*

29. *Ibid.* pp. 163-67 ; *ibid.* fol. xxxiii. *seq.*

30. Dürer in "Kleine Passion," Lotto in the Berlin Museum, Correggio in Mrs. Benson's collection at London. Other works are quoted by Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, ii. p. 296.

31. Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, and Raphael's "Spasimo" in the Prado, are the most important artistic representations of the Madonna's sorrow when she sees the Saviour taken to His shameful execution.

32. Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 419 ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e siècle*, pp. 223-227.

33. Cf. Tikkanen, "Uttrycken för smärta och sorg i konsten," in *Ord och Bild*, 1905, p. 468.

34. Ambrosius, *De obitu Valentiniani consolatio* (*Patr. Lat.* xvi. col. 1431).

35. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, p. 936. Appendix (Mary *stood* at the Cross because her faith held her erect, because no sin bowed her to the earth, and because her will corresponded with God's will).

36. It even happened that pictures representing the Madonna lying before the Cross were destroyed by the Papal command ; cf. Broussolle, *De la Visitation, etc.*, pp. 335-336, 405, 421 ; Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 538 *seq.* These compositions are of course strictly condemned in Molanus's orthodox work on religious painting, *De historia sacrarum imaginum*, pp. 535-536. Cf. also Benedictus XIV. *op. cit.* p. 272.

37. Ephraim Syrus, *Opera*, Graece-Latine, iii. p. 574 (Threni, *i.e.* lamentationes gloriosissimae V. Mariae, super Passionem Domini). Cf. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, pp. 500 *seq.*

38. Baumgartner, *Die lateinische und griechische Literatur der christlichen Völker*, pp. 540-546.

39. Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. 287 *seq.*; Wechssler, *Die romanischen Marienklagen*, pp. 8 *seq.*

40. Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. p. 136.

41. Wechssler, *op. cit.* pp. 10-11.

42. Beda, *Opera* v. *Ascetica dubia* (*Patr. Lat.* xciv. col. 565).

43. Cf. especially S. Bernardus [?], *Liber de passione Christi et doloribus et planctibus matris ejus* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxii. cols. 1133-1142). For information as to other writings on this subject see Linder, *Plainte de la Vierge*, pp. clviii. and clxv. *seq.*

44. Wechssler, *op. cit.* p. 32; Linder, *op. cit.* p. clxii.

45. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iv. p. 52.

46. *Ibid.* i. p. 179.

47. *Ibid.* p. 108. For Mary's suffering at the Cross as a martyrdom cf. also the sequel to Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, pp. 936 *seq.*; and Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. p. 153 (extract from Ælfric's sermons).

48. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 201; *Vita Christi*, fol. xl. verso.

49. *Ibid.* p. 202. No corresponding passage found in *Vita Christi*.

50. Cf. Wechssler, *op. cit.* 10-11. For the *Planctus* poetry cf. also Lângfors, *Li Regres Nostre Dame*, pp. cxvi. *seq.*

51. See Wechssler, *op. cit.* p. 6.

52. *Ibid.* p. 7.

53. Giotto at Assisi. In the wall-painting at Padua the Madonna stands upright, although drooping, at the Cross.

54. Even in Grünewald's naturalistic Crucifixion at Karlsruhe the Madonna retains her expression of unbroken dignity. In the same painter's picture at Kolmar, on the contrary, we see that she would sink to the earth from sorrow if John was not supporting her.

55. Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 348 (quotation from Darras, *La Légende de Notre Dame*).

56. Detzel, *op. cit.* p. 425.

57. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, pp. 209-210; *Vita Christi*, fol. xliv. *seq.*

58. *Ibid.* pp. 210-215; *ibid.* fol. xliv. *seq.*

59. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. p. 269.

60. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e^ siècle*, p. 670. In Metaphrastes' *S. Mariae planctus* the Virgin recalls bitterly the time when the dead Man lay as a Child at her bosom (*Patr. Graec.* cxiv. col. 215).

61. Cf. Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp*, p. 284. The quotations from Mâle and Birgitta are also given by Meinander. Mâle, *L'Art rel. de la fin du moyen âge*, p. 124.

62. Condivi, *Vita di Michel Agnolo*, p. 14.

63. Crivelli in Mr. R. Crawshay's collection in London; Reinach, *Répertoire de peintures*, ii. p. 481.

64. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, p. 215; *Vita Christi*, fol. xlv. *recto*.

65. Cf. Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 18; Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 256; Interian de Ayala, *El Pintor cristiano*, ii. p. 163.

66. Cf. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, ll. 357-364 (*Patr. Lat.* xix. col. 743, quoted in Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 483); Honorius Augustodunensis, *Lucidarius* in *Svenska Kyrkobruk*, p. 161; Rupertus Tuitiensis (*De divinis officiis Patr. Lat.* clxx. col. 205-206); Durand, *Rational*, ii. p. 55. Other passages are

quoted by Grimouard de S. Laurent, *Guide de l'art chrétien*, iv. p. 389, and Livius, *Mary in the Epistles*, pp. 34-40.

67. *Vita B. Virginis Marie rhythmica*, pp. 207 and 215.

68. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iii. p. 210.

69. Bonaventura, *Betraktelser*, pp. 221 *seq.*; *Vita Christi*, fol. xlvii. *recto et verso*.

CHAPTER XX

1. Cf. Livius, *Mary in the Epistles* (*passim*).

2. Rohault de Fleury, *L'Évangile*, ii. pp. 301 *seq.*; Detzel, *Christliche Ikonographie*, i. pp. 483 *seq.*; Venturi, *La Madone*, pp. 371-383; Broussolle, *Le Christ de la Légende Dorée*, pp. 407-440.

3. Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, quoted in Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 237.

4. *Vita B. Virginis Marie rhythmica*, pp. 232-237; Walther von Rheinau, *Marienleben*, iv. pp. 29 *seq.*

5. *Vita rhythmica*, pp. 219-239; Walther von Rheinau, *op. cit.* iv. pp. 18-33.

6. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 226 :—

> Nemo tamen scrupulosus vel ipsius causetur
> De Marie vestibus, vel scandalizetur.
> Quoniam mundissimam virginem decebat
> Uti mundis vestibus, ipsa nec habebat
> Causam, cur cilicium, vel sagulum portaret,
> Vel vestem penitentie; nam quod emendaret
> Per luctum penitentie, nunquam hec peccatum
> Fecit, innocentie semper servans statum.

Walther von Rheinau, *op. cit.* iv. p. 23.

7. Cf., however, Ephraim Syrus (*Carmina Nisibena*, p. 175, and the quotations given by Lucius, *Anfänge des Heiligenkults*, p. 442).

8. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 442.

9. For a detailed treatment of the history of the Dormition and Assumption legends see Lucius, *op. cit.* pp. 441-451, 512-516. Cf. also Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, pp. 338-367; Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt*, pp. 1-28.

10. Mary's daily visit to the Saviour's grave is described also in *Johannis liber de dormitione Mariae*. Extracts from this work are translated by Livius, *op. cit.* p. 193.

11. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, pp. 504 *seq.*

12. For the group of legends in which Mary is represented as fearing death, see Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 513.

13. Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 408.

14. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 443.

15. Cf. Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, p. 177; cf. also Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita* in Bourassé, *Summa aurea*, i. p. 8.

16. Other representations of this motive are enumerated by Schultz, *Die Legende vom Leben der Jungfrau Maria*, pp. 69-70. The most important of these

is Ottaviano Nelli's fresco in the Palazzo Trinci at Foligno. This painting is reproduced in Venturi, *La Madone*, p. 401.

17. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 40; Walther von Rheinau, *op. cit.* iv. p. 34.

18. Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 125.

19. According to the Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew, the Christ-child during the flight into Egypt caused an angel to carry a branch of the palm to "His Father's paradise." Tischendorf, *Evangelia apocrypha*, p. 89.

20. John's journey through the air is represented in one of Nelli's frescoes at Foligno (reproduced in Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 402).

21. Metaphrastes, *Oratio de Sancta Maria* (*Patr. Graec.* cxv. col. 557), quoted in Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 243.

22. *Vita rhythmica*, p. 241; Walther von Rheinau, *op. cit.* iv. p. 35. The weeping of the women at their separation from Mary is described at length in *Mariä Himmelfahrt*, an old German play from the beginning of the fourteenth century (reprinted in Mone, *Altteutsche Schauspiele*; cf. especially pp. 50 *seq.*).

23. Detzel, *op. cit.* i. p. 506, translation of a version given by Didron. No information is given as to the source.

24. In Birgitta's writings numerous descriptions of Mary's death and ascension occur; cf. *Uppenbarelser*, ii. p. 57; iii. pp. 160-162; iv. p. 221.

25. Cf. Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge*, p. 65 (on French art).

26. Sinding, *op. cit.* p. 70; Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 402.

27. The description of the typical representations of Mary's deathbed is chiefly based upon the unknown Alsace master's picture in the Karlsruhe Museum (from about 1460). In its general character this composition does not essentially differ from the pictures painted by so many anonymous masters of the Flemish, Provençal, and Austrian schools. A good selection from these works is reproduced in Reinach's *Répertoire de peintures*, ii. pp. 502-510. "Der Meister des Todes Mariä," however, has given the scene a more disturbed and dramatic character. Cf. the pictures in the Old Picture Gallery at Munich, and in the Wallraff-Richartz Museum at Cologne.

28. The idea that Mary's death was a "repos" is developed in the sermon which introduces the miracle-play, "Un Marchant et un larron," *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, ii. p. 92.

29. Molanus, *Historia sacrarum imaginum*, quoted in Schultz, *op. cit.* p. 72.

30. Reproduction and description of this picture in Detzel, *op. cit.* i. pp. 511 and 513.

31. Ottaviano Nelli at Foligno (reproduced in Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 403); Bartolo di Maëstro Fredi at Siena (reproduced in Reinach, *op. cit.* i. p. 482).

32. Jacobus de Voragine, *op. cit.* p. 524.

33. Lucius, *op. cit.* p. 445.

34. Cf. Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. pp. 260-268 (hymns from the fourth to the twelfth century); *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, pp. 120, 127, 236; Leyser, *Deutsche Predigten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 93-98.

In the majority of Assumption hymns the idea is expressed that the sinless body in which God dwelt could not be abandoned to decay. Thus Petrus Olai of Vadstena sings:—

Non passus est rex gloriae
Corpus matris putrescere,
Ex quo suscepit hostiam,
Qua summam pandit gratiam.

KLEMMING, *Piae cantiones*, p. 132; *Analecta hymnica*, xlviii. p. 419.

In an old school song on Mary's ascension ("Honestatis mentis purae— Plaudant omnes creaturae") we read :—

Strophe 11.
Credamus ergo benigne,
Quod illud corpus insigne
Non est datum vermibus ;
Vermis corpus non gustavit,
In quo Christus habitavit
Plene novem mensibus.

Anal. hymn. ii. p. 121 ("Carmina scholarium Campensium").

And in another hymn "Ave, dies laudabilis," the Saviour Himself addresses His mother's body :—

Strophe 3.
Nunquam decet dissolvere
Nec in terram resolvere
Corpus immaculatum.
Nunquam fuit infamia
Foetoris nec miseria
Nisi propter reatum.

Caro tua caro mea,
Talis caro non est rea
Cujuscunque criminis,
Ergo tua non sentiet
Dolorem nec percipiet
Foetorem putredinis.

Anal. hymn. xxxi. p. 203.

The songs on Mary's death gain an interest if read in connection with the poems in which the mediaeval bards express their horror at the decay of the earthly body. As a contrast to the examples cited above we may quote some strophes from an anonymous meditation on death ("Cum sim modo moriturus") :—

Strophe 2.
Hic extinctum corpus jacet,
Decor perit, lingua tacet,
Caro datur vermibus,
Vermes nostri sunt heredes,
Scorpiones et serpentes
Nos corrodunt dentibus.

Strophe 4.
Jacet homo in sepulcro
Et nil habet jam de pulchro
Privatus honoribus,
Putret caro, patent ossa,
Cuncta videns in hac fossa
Repleta foetoribus.

Strophe 16.
Intestina computrescent,
Ibi vermes requiescunt
Corrodentes omnia ;
Ubi honor hujus mundi,
Ubi opes, ubi fundi,
Ubi mundi gloria ?

Anal. hymn. xxxiii. p. 283 ("Pia dictami

Cf. also a poem of the same import (*ibid.* p. 288) with the heading "

homo debet cogitare, qualis erit in sepulcro." The descriptions of the horrors of decay belonged, as stated above, to the *loci communes* of ascetic literature; cf. cap. xiii. in the foregoing.

35. Cf. Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, pp. 235 and 389.

36. Cf. a sermon of Petrus de Blois on Mary's Assumption, *Patr. Lat.* ccvii. col. 662, quoted in Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry*, p. 106.

37. Cf. *Anal. hymn.* ix. p. 62:—

Hester ab humilitate
Ducitur in caritate
Regis ad cubiculum.

38. *Vita rhythmica*, pp. 251 *seq.*; Walther von Rheinau, *op. cit.* iv. pp. 43 *seq.*

39. Cf. Durand, *Rational*, v. p. 79.

40. Cf. a German painting in the Rouen Museum, reproduced by Reinach, *op. cit.* i. p. 486. This representation is clearly connected with a variation of the legend according to which the hands of the Jews were *cut off* by the angels, and, detached from their bodies, stuck to Mary's bier. Sinding, *op. cit.* p. 11.

41. For the "pulpit" erected for the exhibition of the precious relic, see Chap. IV. According to Trombelli the girdle at the Prato is only a relic of the second order, which acquired its sanctity through being placed in contact with the Virgin's own belt. Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, p. 93.

42. Among the representations of the giving of the girdle to Thomas should be mentioned Rosellino's relief on the inner pulpit of the cathedral at Prato, Orcagna's relief in the tabernacle of Or San Michele at Florence, Francesco Granacci's picture in the Uffizi at Florence, and Sodoma's painting in the Oratorio di S. Bernardino at Siena. Other examples are given by Schultz, *op. cit.* pp. 74-75.

43. Reproduction in Venturi, *op. cit.* p. 396.

44. Schultz, *op. cit.* p. 73.

45. Cf. *e.g.* Velasquez' picture in the Prado Gallery.

46. Bonaventura, *Psautier de la S. Vierge*, p. 1.

CHAPTER XXI

1. The light snowfall, which mildly covers the ground and at its melting waters the fields, has been interpreted by Gregory the Great as a symbol of the preachers who, in contemplation, raised themselves to God's Heaven, to descend afterwards with their words to the minds of the faithful (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia*, xxvii. 24, *Patr. Lat.* lxxvi. col. 424). According to this explanation the snow is classified in the same series of images as the dew, rain, and cloud symbols (cf. Chap. XV.). The cold of the snow can, however, as Gregorius points out, serve also as a symbol for the love which has grown cold and for the heart hardened in sin. On the other hand, the Catholic symbolists quote the Psalmist's words: "Dat nivem sicut lanam" (Vulgate, Ps. cxlvii. 16). God, it is said, makes the snow as warm as wool if man's soul, in the winter of earthly life, has been gladdened by grace. The wool again, according to Augustine (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Patr. Lat.* xxxvii. col. 1932), is the clothing of God Himself, *i.e.* the Christian Church. The quotations from Gregory and Augustine are given by La Bouillerie, *Symbolisme de la nature*, i. pp. 111 *seq.*

Thus, through the Church, which according to the Catholic idea, corresponds to the Madonna, the snow symbolism is associated with the Blessed Virgin; but we need not make this detour in order to pass from the snow to the Madonna. The Virgin's purity must quite spontaneously recall that image which is used in the Psalms to denote perfect spotlessness; Ps. li. 7; La Bouillerie, *op. cit.* i. p. 113.

These associations of ideas have gained in importance for pious literature by reason of the miracle which gave rise to the building of the Church of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome—the church where the holy manger is still preserved. A rich and childless patrician, Johannes, had promised to give the whole of his fortune to the Blessed Virgin if she would only let him know how he might best use his possessions in her honour. He was awakened one night in August by a vision which summoned him to go to the Esquiline Hill, where Mary had marked out a place for a church, which he was to have erected. When he arrived at the hill he was astonished to see a mild snowfall, which descended upon the green grass. Not only did Nature depart from her ordinary course to allow snow to fall in the height of summer, but still more wonderful, the flakes arranged themselves in a regular figure which formed the ground-plan of a great church. So exact was the marking of the ground that Johannes and Pope Liberius only needed to follow the contour of the snow in order to mark out the limits for the building, which was to be Mary's most famous sanctuary in Rome. Cf. Benedictus XIV, *De Jesu Christi matrisque ejus festis*, pp. 282-288. Masolino's little picture in the Museo Nazionale at Naples shows us both the snow-cloud, over which the Madonna floats with the Child at her bosom, and the pious men who with their spades dig up the ground around the white outline.

A legend which was connected with one of the greatest and most famous churches in Christendom naturally acquired a wide popularity throughout the Catholic world. A proof of this popularity is found in the fact that in many places churches of the Madonna were erected in memory of the miracle on the Esquiline—"S. Maria delle nevi," or "S. Maria ad nives." Another and still more remarkable result of the pious legend is that special festivals were celebrated to commemorate the miraculous snowfall. In *Analecta hymnica* many rhymed offices are printed for the feast of "S. Maria nivis" (cf. *e.g.* iv. pp. 59-60; viii. pp. 59-60; xvi. pp. 56-57; xix. pp. 23-24). The most interesting of these liturgical poems was written by Archbishop Johannes a Jenstein at Prague, the same man who worked so zealously for the Visitation festival (cf. note 18 to Chap. XVI.).

In Jenstein's songs use is made of all the meanings associated with the idea of snow. Thus the softness of snow, compared with wool, is likened to the Virgin's mildness:—

Qui dat nivem sicut lanam
Mollem atque teneram,
Hic Mariam nobis piam
Reddit ac propitiam.

Anal. hymn. xlviii. p. 429.

Its whiteness is compared to Mary's purity:—

Super nivem candidior
E nive domicilium
Struit, cum esset albior
Haec super omne lilium.

Ibid. p. 434.

And the miracle of the snow being able, without melting, to lie on the warm ground, is compared to that miracle by which Mary's chastity could continue beside her love :—

Quomodo nix in aestate
Durat neque solvitur,
Mire sic cum caritate
Castitas conjungitur.
Ibid. p. 429.

2. On old Christian tombstones the dead are often spoken of as "pure doves without gall" (Beissel, *Bilder aus der Gesch. d. altchristl. Kunst und Liturgie*, p. 9). This epithet has commonly been applied to Mary, perhaps by reason of a similar change of meaning to that which led to the pictures of the souls of the dead, the so-called *orants*, being transformed into Madonna pictures. "Die tûbe âne Galle" is considered to be the earliest of the symbols of the Madonna found in German poetry (Mansberg, *Daz hohe liet von der maget*, p. 33 ; references to Otfried, Wernher von Tegernsee, and Konrad von Würzburg). It was easy, as Mansberg points out, to compare Mary to Noah's dove, which brought the world the olive branch of peace. The use of the dove as an eucharistic tabernacle also contributed to associate this creature, which symbolised the soul and innocence, with the Holy Virgin. Finally, in this as in so many other respects, the poetry of the Madonna has been influenced by the Song of Solomon, in which the young bride is compared to a dove. For the dove-symbolism cf. *Index Marianus* (*Patr. Lat.* cxix. cols. 503 *seq.*).

3. Cf. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. pp. 130-131 (the Virgin Mary explains how all virtues and all grace are enclosed in her). On the mirror as a Madonna-symbol in old German literature see Grimm in his introduction to Konrad v. Würzburg, *Goldene Schmiede*, p. xxxi. The actual image is, as Mrs. Jameson points out (*Legends of the Madonna*, pp. xlvi *seq.*), probably borrowed from the Book of Wisdom, *Liber Sapientiae*, vii. 26 (Versio Vulgata).

4. Konrad von Haimburg, *Annulus B.M. Virginis* (*Anal. hymn.* iii. pp. 26 *seq.*) ; Ulrich Stöcklin von Rattach, *Super Ave Maria* (*ibid.* vi. pp. 45, 46) ; and the anonymous hymn, *De Beata Maria Virgine* (*ibid.* xlvi. p. 57). *Libellus de Corona virginis* (Ad S. Hildefonsi opera appendix, *Patr. Lat.* xcvi. col. 285 *seq.* ; summary and extracts in Barbier, *La Sainte Vierge*, i.) ; cf. also Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, pp. 198-203.

There are, however, instances of Mary herself being spoken of as a precious stone set in "the diadem of the Supreme King." Thus Bernardus Morlanensis sings in his great *Mariale* :—

Margarita summi sita
Regis diademate,
Quae cunctarum gratiarum
Es ornata schemate.
Anal. hymn. l. p. 434.

5. For Mary's name in popular names of plants see Rohault de Fleury, *La S. Vierge*, i. pp. 330-335 ; Thiébaud, *Marie dans les fleurs* (*passim*) ; Rock, *The Church of our Fathers*, iii. p. 235 ; Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, pp. 194 *seq.*

6. Thiébaud, *op. cit.* p. 148 (quotation from Ambrosius).

7. On the rose as Madonna-symbol see the facts collected by Joret, *La Rose*

dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge, pp. 245-258. See also *Index Marianus* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxix.).

8. *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, p. 231: "sicut spinarum vicinitas florentis rose odorem non minuit, ita tribulacionum immensitas in te Christi mater minorare non valuit virtutem constancie. Omnium enim virtutum fragrancia redolebas."

9. Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen*, ii. p. 272. The worship of Mary's name has given rise to much strained symbolisation. Not only have attempts been made to find hidden and profound meanings in the word "Mary," but it has also been thought that the sounds and signs of which the name is composed witness to how all nature's perfections are united in the being of the Virgin. Thus in Escobar's *Historia de la Virgen Madre de Dios* each of the petals of the mystic rose, *i.e.* each of the letters, has been separately praised. In the stanzas which glorify M, all the substantives begin with M; in the following stanzas epithets are employed which begin with A, and so on. The whole of the sixth song of the long poem consists exclusively of alphabetically arranged Madonna-symbols. This monument of alphabetical art, however, witnesses more to the author's learning and ingenuity than to the depth of his feelings for Mary. A more convincing proof of piety has been given by the unknown bard whose poems are preserved in the collections of Walter Map's writings:—

Cum nomen audio Mariae Virginis
Vel sacris lectito scriptum in paginis
Sonus vel literae sacri vocaminis
Pastū me recreant mirae dulcedinis.

Latin Poems, attr. to Walter Map, p. 196, quoted in Waterton, *op. cit.* p. 18.

There were also many other pious men who declared that Mary's name was sweeter than honey to their mouths. Father Juvenal Ancina even licked his lips every time he uttered the sweet letters; cf. Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, pp. 39 and 234-247.

10. Cf. Joret, *op. cit.* pp. 237-245; Mechthild, *Offenbarungen*, pp. 59-60.

11. Leyser, *Deutsche Predigten*, p. 37.

12. For the lily in Madonna-poetry see La Bouillerie, *op. cit.* i. pp. 271 *seq.*; Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, pp. 283 *seq.* (rich collection of quotations from early Christian and mediaeval literature); Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 131.

The rose and lily are used indifferently to signify the Saviour and His mother. Thus in some Visitation hymns Mary is sung as a rose hiding within it a lily (Mone, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 114 and 120). On the other hand, there are nativity hymns in which it is said that God issues from His mother's womb like a rose from a lily (*Piae cantiones*, p. 19). Wackernagel (*Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, ii. p. 300) prints a fourteenth-century German song, in which Mary addresses her Child as the "rose from Jerusalem" and the "lily from Bethlehem." Individual bards could, it appears, make a very free use of flower-symbolism. The imagery of the Song of Solomon, and the parables of the New Testament, gave them a right to apply the similes both to God and His human virgin mother.

13. Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 15.

14. Cf. Petrus Olaï of Vadstena, *Cantus sororum*:—

Tu vere fragrans lilium
Cujus odore trahitur
Ad te Deus, ut habeat
Te sibi domicilium.

Anal. hymn. xlviii. p. 416; *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, p. 224.

15. Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, p. 284, and *L'Oblat*. p. 92.

16. Huysmans, *La Cathédrale*, p. 286.

17. Thiébaud, *op. cit.* p. 148.

18. Cf. the introductory sermon to the miracle "S. Jehan le Paulu," *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, v. pp. 93-94.

19. With these words the phrase is cited in Cornelius a Lapide's mediaeval compilation (*Les Trésors*, iii. p. 193). I have not succeeded in hunting up any exact correspondence to the phrase in Bernard's writings. Cf., however, *Ad B. Mariam sermo panegyricus* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiv. col. 1012), "hi sunt quorum odore suavissimo totam domum Domini reples, o Maria, viola humilitatis, lilium castitatis, rosa charitatis."

20. Cf. Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, pp. 92-102 (extracts from Ambrosius, Hieronymus, Ephraim, etc.).

21. Cf. Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIII^e^ siècle*, p. 273; and *L'Art rel. de la fin du moyen âge*, pp. 221 *seq.*; Mansberg, *Daz hohe liet von der maget*, p. 17; Küchenthal, *Die Mutter Gottes*, p. 40.

22. Cf. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 63; Auber, *Histoire du symbolisme*, ii. p. 123; Broussolle, *De la Visitation à la Passion*, p. 215.

23. For the interpretation of this passage (Solomon's Song iii. 6-11) cf. Haupt, *Biblische Liebeslieder*, p. 21.

24. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. pp. 27 *seq.*; cf. i. p. 172, ii. p. 240. See also Durand, *Rational*, v. p. 86. For the dawn as symbol of Mary among the early Fathers, see Livius, *op. cit.* pp. 95, 100, 122, and 223 (quotations from Methodius, Hieronymus, and others).

25. As early as in Hermas' *Pastor* and Melito's *Clavis* the tower is used as a symbol of the Church (Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes*, p. 142). All that applies to the Church can, as often mentioned, be applied to Mary.

26. *Paroissien complet*, p. 21.

27. Cf. Giotto's "Triumph of Chastity" in the lower church of Assisi.

28. Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, p. 63. In a Bohemian church-song the same thought is expressed ("Salve, amicta sole"):—

Strophe 8.

O turris fortitudinis,
Scutum auxilii,
Ex te mille clypei
Dependent aurei.

Anal. hymn. i. p. 135.

29. Ambrosius, *De institutione virginis* (*Patr. Lat.* xvi. col. 336).

30. Ambrosius, *De virginibus* (*ibid.* coll. 211-212).

31. Hesychius [?], *Homilia de Deipara* (*Patr. Graec.* xciii. col. 1463); quoted in Livius, *op. cit.* p. 98.

32. Cf. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 187 ("Gaude pascha fidelium"):—

Hortus clausus et amoenus,
omni flore semper plenus,
quem totum singulariter
auster perflavit suaviter.

33. See the passages from the earliest Fathers, quoted by Livius, *op. cit.* pp. 97 *seq.*

34. Cf. *e.g.* Konrad von Haimburg's *Hortulus B.V. Mariae* (*Anal. hymn.* iii. pp. 30 *seq.*). This poem is summarised by Remy de Gourmont, who does not

omit to bring out the piquant element in the poet's imagery. See *Le Latin mystique*, pp. 145-146.

35. Bernardus, *Ad B. Mariam sermo panegyricus* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiv. col. 1011); quoted in Barbier, *La Sainte Vierge*, i. pp. 138-139.

36. Cf. Chap. XVII. in the foregoing.

37. For quotations from the early Fathers see *Index Marianus* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxix.). For a mass of information about the imagery of mediaeval poetry see Mansberg, *op. cit.* p. 32.

38. The burning bush is cited in a Mary-sermon of Bishop Proclus († 446). See Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung*, p. 215. This image is used perpetually, like the enclosed garden and the sealed well, from the beginning of the fifth century in Patristic literature. Cf. the index to Livius's work.

39. Cf. Nicolas Froment's great picture in the cathedral at Aix-en-Provence, exhibited in the exhibition of "Les primitifs Français" in Paris in 1904.

40. Ambrosius, *De spiritu sancto* (*Patr. Lat.* xvi. col. 830), quoted in Bourassé, *Summa*, v. col. 695.

41. Lehner, *op. cit.* pp. 23, 211, 215; Livius, *op. cit.* p. 155; Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. 252.

42. Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. p. 467. The same thought is varied perpetually by the Syrian poet; cf. pp. 422, 432, 434, 544, 548, 558, 560, 622, 624.

43. Clement, *Carmina e poetis Christianis excerpta*, p. 448; Bernardus Morlanensis, *Mariale* (*Anal. hymn.* l. p. 439). This poem was formerly ascribed to Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, S. Anselm and others. Cf. Dreves's introduction to B. Morlanensis' poems, *op. cit.* p. 423. In *Anal. hymn.* the last verse runs not "continentem omnia," but "continentem aethera."

44. It is not necessary to adduce more than a small selection of the poems, in which the contrast between the smallness of the shrine and the greatness of its contents is expressed in a rhetorical antithesis. In Pope Damasus' *Carmen secundum* the thought has not yet received its compact formulation, but there is a stately language in the verses which describe the Incarnation as a miracle by which the "all-including" is enclosed in the Virgin's womb:—

. . . . . .
Quem verbo inclusum Mariae mox numine viso
Virginei tumuere sinus, innuptaque mater
Arcano obstupuit compleri viscera partu,
Auctorem paritura suum, mortalia corda
Artificem texere poli mundique, sub imo
Pectore, quo totum late complectitur orbem,
Et qui non spatiis terrae, non aequoris undis
Nec capitur coelo, parvos confluxit in artus.

Patr. Lat. xiii. col. 376.

A German verse-translation gives a too free, but in the main a correct expression of the fundamental thought of the poem:—

. . . . . und unter dem Herzen
Lag er versteckt, der umfasst den weit sich breitenden Weltkreis.

LEHNER, *op. cit.* p. 262.

In Hrotsvitha's *Life of Mary* the power of the divine embryo is emphasised

more than its greatness. The poetess feels unworthy of singing her who is praised by the whole world :—

> Hunc quia virgineo portasti ventre puella
> Inclusum, cuncta qui regit imperio.
>
> HROTSVITHA, *Werke*, ed. Barack, p. 8.

In the mediaeval hymns, on the contrary, the contrast of greatness is perpetually emphasised. Cf. Bonaventura, *Psautier*, p. 38 ; *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, pp. 93, 96, 227 ; Mone, *Hymnen*, ii. pp. 58-59, 62-63, 70 ; *Anal. hymn.* i. p. 63 ; vii. pp. 47, 117 ; xxxii. p. 68 ; xlvi. p. 180 ; xlviii. p. 32.

45. Levy, *Lirica italiana*, p. 164. In Poletto's *La Vergine Madre nelle opere di Dante*, p. 23, this poem is ascribed to Jacopone da Todi.

46. Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, ii. p. 601. Among the expressions of the same idea in modern poetry deserve to be mentioned a "chanson" of Gautier de Coinçy, *Miracles*, ed. Pouquet, p. 21, and John Donne's poem on the Annunciation :—

> . . . yea, thou art now
> Thy Maker's maker, and thy Father's mother.
> Thou hast light in dark, and shutt'st in little room
> Immensity, cloister'd in thy dear womb.
>
> *Poems*, i. p. 153.

The same play with the ideas of the finite and the infinite appears in an epigram on Alexander the Great, which was employed by seventeenth-century poets for memorial inscriptions to great and far-travelled men :—

> Den hela världen förr tyckts nästan alltför trång
> Åt den är denna plats, tri alnar jord, för lång.
>
> (Cf. Castrén, *Stormaktstidens diktning*, p. 141.)

47. 1 Kings viii. 27 ; cf. 2 Chronicles vi. 18 ; Isaiah lxvi. 1.

48. Acts vii. 48-49, xvii. 24.

49. Hieronymus, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae* (*Patr. Lat.* xxiii. col. 210) ; quoted in Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge*, p. 22.

50. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, i. pp. 389 *seq.* ; cf. iv. p. 234.

51. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 233 (*Psalterium Mariae*, "Ave porta paradisi"). For the temple-symbolism cf. Pinicelli, *Symbola virginea* in Bourassé, *Summa*, iii. cols. 45 *seq.* ; *Anal. hymn.* xxxii. p. 20 ; *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, pp. 40-41, 59, 66, 211-212, 218, 220-221. In Bonaventura's Psalter (*Psautier*, p. 168), the expression of the 84th Psalm is applied to Mary : "Quam dilecta tabernacula tua" (Ps. lxxxiii. in the Vulgate). And S. Alphonso de Liguori asserts (*Glories of Mary*, p. 200), with the support of Ps. xxvi. 8-9 (Vulgate, Ps. xxv.), that King David worshipped Mary when he exclaims in the Psalm :—

> "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house : and the place where thine honour dwelleth."
>
> "Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae, et locum habitationis gloriae tuae."

52. *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, pp. 103, 223, 229.

53. Liguori, *op. cit.* p. 95. *Anal. hymn.* xx. p. 145 ("Ave maris stella—Vera mellis stilla") :—

> Tu es tabernaculum
> Ad titulum
> Positum in sole.

Cf. note 4 to Chap. XVI. See also S. Francis's song to Mary, translated in Jørgensen, *Den hellige Frans*, pp. 145-146.

54. Dante, *Il Convivio*, iv. 5, quoted in Polotto, *op. cit.* p. 73. The inn-symbol is already found in Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 140 (*Patr. Lat.* lii. col. 577):—

"Heaven shakes before God, the angels tremble before Him, the creation cannot support Him, and nature cannot enclose Him. But a Virgin has so taken, received, and nourished Him as a guest in her womb, that she, as rent for her house, and as the price of her bosom, could demand peace for the earth, honour for Heaven, redemption for the lost," etc. (Quoted by Livius, *op. cit.* p. 58.)

55. *Polyanthea Mariana*, in Bourassé, *Summa*, ix. col. 1251.

56. Gherit van der Goude, *Dat Boexken van der Missen*, p. x. Cf. note 24 to Chap. V.

57. *Bruder Hans'ens Marienlieder*, p. 318:—

Sie ist eyn tempel und eyn sel,
Des grosen heers Emanuel,
Und sie is der personen dry
Eyn sacristy.

58. *Polyanthea Mariana*, in Bourassé, *op. cit.* ix. col. 974.

59. Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, ii. p. 922.

60. Zeno, *Tractatus*, ii. 9 (*Patr. Lat.* xi. col. 416); quoted by Lehner, *op. cit.* p. 127.

61. Cf. *Anal. hymn.* xxxiii. pp. 323-324 (*Thronus Salomonis*, a poem of 13 strophes, which contain close applications to Mary of all that is told about Solomon's throne).

62. Ephraim Syrus, *Hymni*, ed. Lamy, ii. p. 582. Cf. pp. 550, 556, and 558.

63. Dante, *Il Purgatorio*, xxix. 107; xxx. 7-9; xxxii. 19.

64. *Jungfru Marie örtagård*, pp. 39 and 211.

65. Liguori, *op. cit.* p. 213.

66. Ephraim Syrus, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 526 and 642.

67. Cf. Liguori, *op. cit.* p. 142.

68. *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, iii. p. 300.

69. Wackernagel, *op. cit.* ii. p. 302.

70. Cf. *e.g.* Mone, *op. cit.* p. 63 ("Salve porta chrystallina"):—

Moyses qua jacuit
scirpea fiscella,
haec, qua deus latuit
virgo est tenella.

71. *Ibid.* ii. p. 72 ("Orbis totus gratuletur"):—

Archa Noë fabricatur,
per quam mundus liberatur,
thronus regi praeparatur,
ubi . . . impetratur.

72. Neale, *Hymni ecclesiae* (In festo nativ. Domini: "In hoc anni circulo"):—

Noë pro diluvio
Clauso foris ostio,
Arcam intrat hodie
Per virginem Mariam.
Verbum caro factum est
Per virginem Mariam.

Cf. also *Anal. hymn.* xxxii. p. 10, and Trombelli, *S. Mariae vita*, in Bourassé, *Summa*, i. p. 9.

73. *Vita B.V. Marie rhythmica*, p. 76; Walther von Rheinau, *Marienleben*, ii. p. 20.

74. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, iv. pp. 218 *seq.* A similar, though less accurately executed comparison of Noah's ark and Mary's womb, is found in Proclus, *Oratio in sancta Theophania* (*Patr. Graec.* lxv. col. 759). On the ark-symbolism of the Early Fathers cf. the index to Livius, *op. cit.*

75. *Ibid.*; Mone, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 270.

76. Proclus, *Oratio de laudibus S. Mariae* (*Patr. Graec.* lxv. col. 754); quoted in Rohault de Fleury, *La Sainte Vierge*, i. p. 366.

77. Cf. *e.g.* a hymn of Eberhard von Sax, printed in Genthe, *Die Jungfrau Maria*, p. 26:—

. . . . . .
Und du gleichest wohl dem Schreine
Uebergold't mit lichtem Scheine,
Wohlgewirket von Sechine,
Das man nie sich wandeln sieht.
. . . . . .

See also *Svenska medeltidsdikter*, pp. 49 and 55.

78. Ephraim Syrus, *op. cit.* ii. p. 530; cf. pp. 594, 600, 602, 606.

79. Proclus, *De incarnatione Domini* (*Patr. Graec.* lxv. col. 699).

80. Pinicelli, *Symbola virginea*, in Bourassé, *Summa*, iii. col. 250 (references to Johannes Damascenus, Johannes Geometra, etc.).

81. *Polyanthea Mariana*, in Bourassé, *op. cit.* ix. coll. 999 *seq.*

82. *Ibid.* col. 970.

83. Adam de S. Victor, *Œuvres*, ii. p. 188.

84. Wackernagel, *op. cit.* ii. p. 318. The poem is given without the author's name, but it is doubtless a translation from Adam de S. Victor's original. The same idea is expressed in a poem of Frouwenlop, *ibid.* ii. p. 203.

As it is from Mary that the world's healing issued, there could have been nothing far-fetched to Catholic poets in comparing her with a chemist's shop; for the use of this image see Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 319; *Anal. hymn.* xxxii. pp. 74 *seq.*, 170-171, and 48.

85. Ephraim Syrus, *op. cit.* ii. p. 524. For other passages from the writings of the Early Fathers see the index to Livius, *op. cit.*

86. Estlander, *Vitterhetens utveckling*, i. p. 425; Lafond, *Notre-dame des poètes*, pp. 146-53 (translation of the introduction to Gonzalo da Bercéo's *Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora*). The fragrant meadow has since Proclus's time been an often used image of the Madonna.

87. Ambrosius, *Hymnus de nativitate Domini* ("A solis ortus cardine") (*Patr. Lat.* xvii. col. 1211).

88. Gregorius Magnus, *In primum Regum expositio* (*Patr. Lat.* lxxix. col. 25); quoted in Trombelli, *Vita B. Mariae* (Bourassé, *Summa*, i. col. 13).

89. Cf. *Index Marianus* (*Patr. Lat.* ccxix.); Montault, *op. cit.* ii. p. 198.

90. Birgitta, *Uppenbarelser*, ii. 156 (Mary compares herself with the rainbow); Montault, *op. cit.* i. p. 148, ii. p. 198.

91. La Bouillerie, *Symbolisme de la nature*, i. p. 26; Cornelius a Lapide, *Les Trésors*, iii. p. 153.

92. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 14, 317. Cf. Bardenhewer, *Der Name Maria* (*passim*).

93. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 101 ("Ave Dei genitrix et immaculata"):—

Strophe 2.
Maria, miseria per te terminatur
Et misericordia per te revocatur,
Per te navigantibus stella maris datur,
Lumen viae panditur, portus demonstratur.

Cf. also Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 4 *seq.*

94. Cf. Meyer in *Handbuch zu den neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, p. 127.

95. Ephraim Syrus, *op. cit.* ii. p. 622; Ambrosius, *De institutione Virginis*, (*Patr. Lat.* xvi. col. 339); Bernardus Clarevallensis, *Sermo I. de adventu Domini* (*Patr. Lat.* clxxxiii. col. 39, quoted in Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i. p. 205); *Anal. hymn.* v. p. 67; l. p. 631; Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 13; *Miracles de Nostre Dame*, iv. pp. 71-74 (Introductory sermon to the Miracle de S. Ignace); Cornelius a Lapide, *Les Trésors*, iii. p. 173; Lehner, *op. cit.* p. 125; Lecanu, *Histoire de la Sainte Vierge*, pp. 69-71; Rohault de Fleury, *La Vierge*, i. p. 3.

96. Missale Aboense, quoted in Klemming's *Piae cantiones*, p. 178 ("Adest dies, qua firmatur—spes promissa et juratur"):—

. . . .
De qua fatur prophetia
predicatur ab Elia
parva sub nubecula.

Cf. also Hello, *Physionomies de saints*, pp. 233-234; Montault, *Iconographie*, ii. p. 64.

97. Gualterus Wiburnus, *Encomium beatae Mariae* ("Ave, Virgo, mater Christi," *Anal. hymn.* l. pp. 631 *seq.*):—

Strophe 18.
Ave nubes penetrata
Phoebi flammis et ornata
Deitatis iride,
Quae sub umbra lucem celas
Et aeternum verbum velas
Nostrae carnis chlamyde.

98. Dante, *Il Paradiso*, xi. 53. Cf. also Petrarca, *Sonetto IV.* ("Trae argomento di lodar Laura dal luogo dov' ella nacque").

99. Ephraim Syrus, *op. cit.* ii. p. 584.

100. Cf. Mone, *op. cit.* ii. p. 180 ("Gaude virgo principalis"):—

Strophe 3.
Tu vernalis amoenitas
es, per quam hiems transiit,
aestivum tempus rediit;
cujus natura bonitas,
cujus forma dilectio,
excisa dei digito
nostrae decenter animae
formam amoris imprime.

101. Bernardus Morlanensis, *Mariale* (*Anal. hymn.* l. p. 443). Cf. also Ulrich Stöcklin's rhymed prayer, *Oratio devota* (*Anal. hymn.* vi., p. 54) :—

Nam si mundus pagina fieret,
Et res omnis in ea scriberet,
Laudes tuas non comprehenderet,
Quia tot sunt, quod non sufficeret.

102. Cornelius a Lapide, *Les Trésors*, iii. p. 163. Cf. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, iii. pp. 3 *seq.* ; Barbier, *La Sainte Vierge*, iii. pp. 77-79 (quotations S. Bernard, from Bonaventura, and Albertus Magnus).

CHAPTER XXII

1. Cf. *e.g.* a wood carving from an old choir-chair at Hollola (photograph in the Historical Museum at Helsingfors).

2. Kraus, *Gesch. d. christl. Kunst*, ii. p. 430 ; Bergner, *Handbuch*, p. 539.

3. Emmerich, *Leben der hlg. Jungfrau Maria*, p. 134.

4. When Durand in his *Rational* treats of the Divine Incarnation, he quotes an utterance of S. Bernard concerning the three miracles which may be distinguished in the mystery. The first is that Mary was a virgin and a mother, the second that her Son was a man and a god, and the third was "*that God gave to fleshly men the power to believe in the two above miracles*" (Durand, *Rational*, iv. p. 271). There is no reason to suppose that S. Bernard concealed any ironic meaning in his words.

5. Boileau, *Satire XII. Sur l'équivoque.*

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